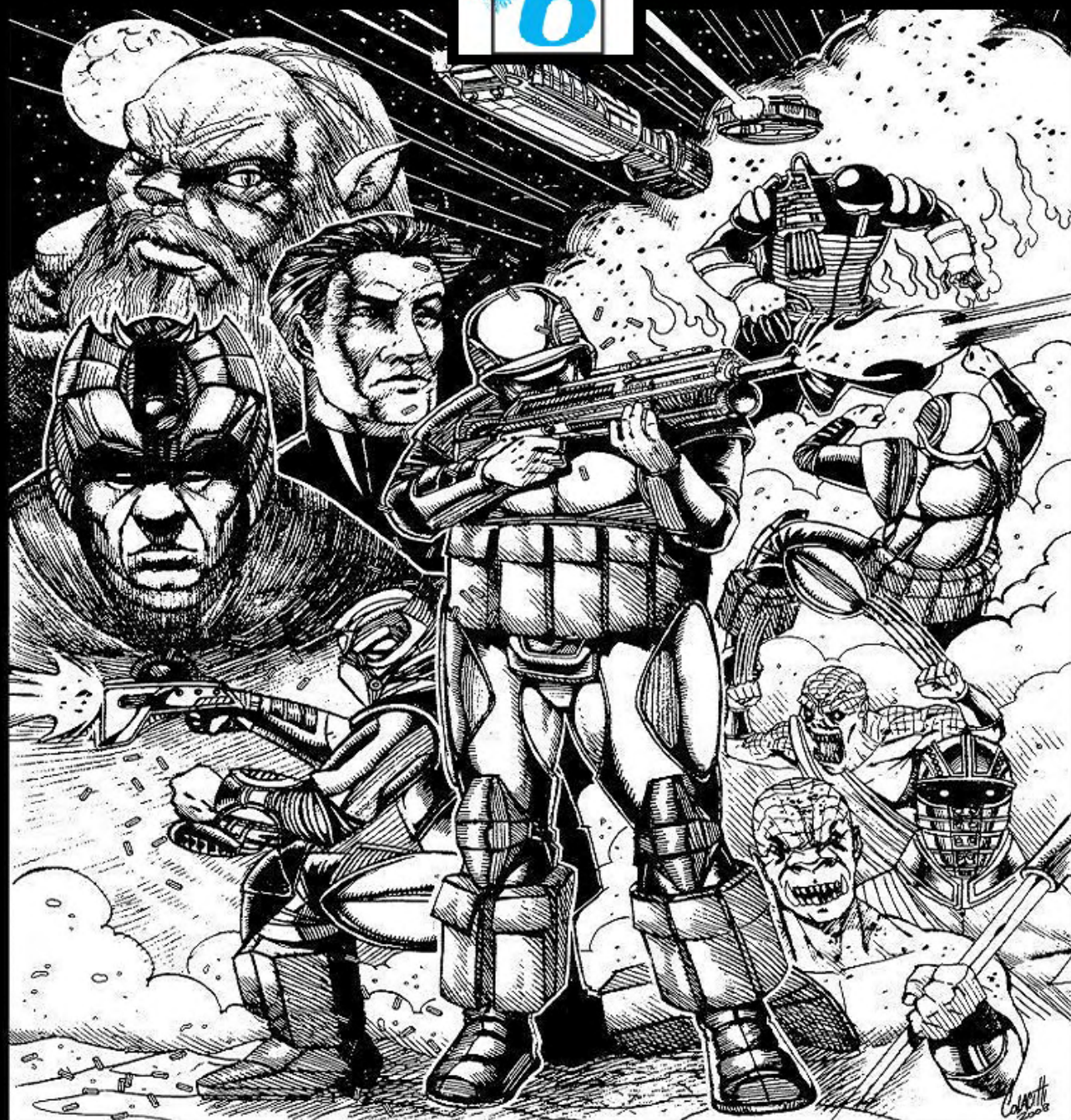


ASTRAL EMPIRES™

The Roleplaying Game



CREATED BY KEVIN MONK

ASTRAL EMPIRES-THE RPG-OPEN D6 EDITION

ASTRAL EMPIRES: The Roleplaying Game

*A SUPPLEMENT FOR THE ASTRAL EMPIRES UNIVERSE
AND OTHER SCIENCE FICTION GAMES*

Powered by OpenD6



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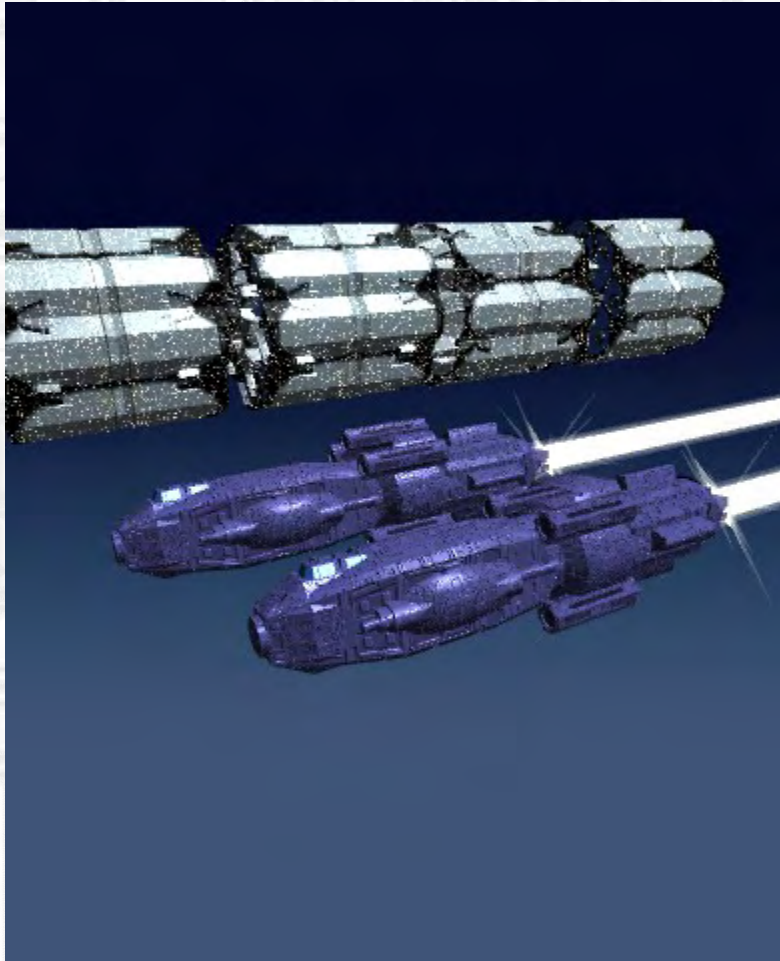
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ASTRAL EMPIRES-THE RPG-OPEN D6 EDITION



Thanks first off to the original authors of the OpenD6 System and to Eric Gibson of West End Games for releasing these fantastic rules for use by other writers and game designers.

Thanks to each person who has ever inspired this author to explore his science fiction dreams. Especially to my parents, my brothers Darrell, Stan, David, and Ken, my sister Cheri and my lovely wife Kami and amazing children Kaleb and Katee. I should also mention Dan, Joe, Ryan, George, the guys at Beyond Comics (now sadly out of business), various librarians throughout my education experience, and my high school and college creative writing instructors. You all make being a sci-fi geek fun!

Thanks also to my Port Nova Media partner and the best collaborator one could hope to have: William Andersen.

And finally.... Much thanks to the authors, movie directors, television writers, game designers and others who have contributed to the wealth of material that makes up the science fiction genre. It is a joy to try to dabble in it a bit myself..

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Author's Note: The Universe of Astral Empires

Astral Empires is many things. It is first an original universe defined by many of the common themes and ideas that have made science fiction a diverse and popular genre in both fiction and gaming. It is also a system for exploring a specific future universe, utilizing multiple game engines in order to bring the Astral Empires setting to life. In addition, it is a shared world open to anyone who desires to see their own unique visions of the future brought to life through the many options it offers. And lastly it is an intentional homage to the science fiction genre and the incredible power of the imagination.

This particular resource uses the familiar OpenD6 system, once one of the top RPG game engines in all of the industry and now an exciting part of the Open Game License movement. Every attempt has been made (and continues to be made) to build Astral Empires and its various related sub-settings into a massive universe akin to the science fiction settings this veteran system once represented. The hope is to draw both classic gamers who know and love the OpenD6 system back and bring in new players who've never tried OpenD6 but want to find out what it is all about. To that end, we have sketched out the framework for a huge and extensive setting for GMs and players alike to explore.

You will find that because of the commonality of certain general themes in science fiction (ie. starships, blasters, aliens, cosmic horror, empires and federations, etc.) there are many similarities between Astral Empires and other fictional worlds that you might be familiar with. Astral Empires is unabashedly built upon the common themes and tropes of this genre so as far as players making connections themselves between the various worlds of their own personal science fiction interests there is no reason to discount the idea that Astral Empires may even represent a possible past or future of any other science fiction property you may be a fan of. In fact, that is one of the purposes and design goals of Astral Empires. To be flexible and far-reaching enough that nearly any sub-genre of science fiction can find a home here. To that end, various "easter eggs" have been built into the fabric of the universe and the stories set herein, as the author is first and foremost a science fiction fan and has tried to share his love of the genre by placing elements throughout these writings which echo common aspects that run through other fictional settings. As far as finding those "easter eggs"... Good hunting!

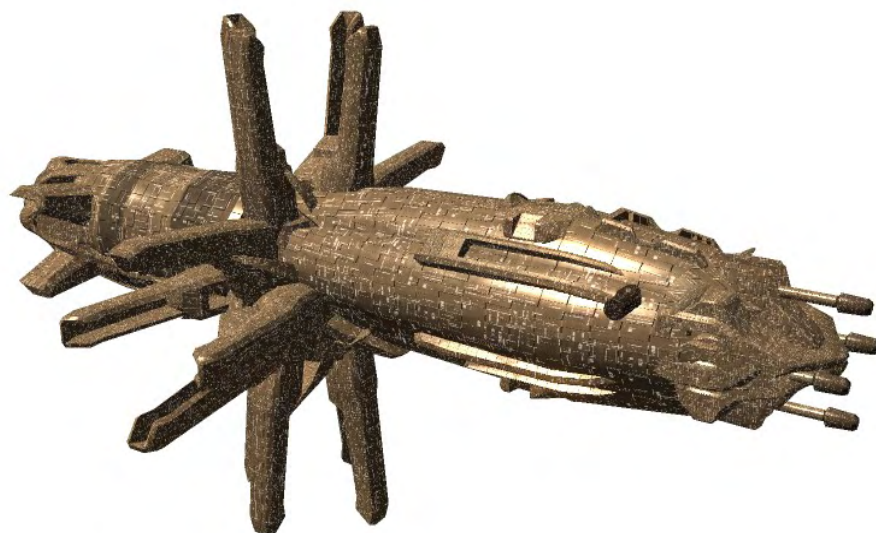
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Also, you may notice that the setting of this era of ASTRAL EMPIRES is built around the idea of a galactic war on a massive scale between multiple factions. The momentous events taking place in this time period mean that it is possible for characters to impact the unfolding history of the ASTRAL EMPIRES universe. Individuals can make a difference, even in a galaxy populated by trillions of sapient beings. For this reason, players should feel free to create characters who can "impact the universe" if they so choose, or they may opt for characters who are merely trying to "get by" in a changing galaxy. The choice is up to the player.

Remember also that you are the final arbiter of *your* universe. You are its creator and can change it any minor or major way that you want. You may ignore whatever material in any of these books that does not jive with your vision as there is no need to feel restricted by the official metaplots of Astral Empires as they exist merely as a framework for telling *your* stories and providing a framework universe for your gaming.

So... head out among the stars and bring your imagination with you. You're starting a fantastic journey into the "history of the future".

Kevin Monk
Creator/Author of "Astral Empires"



It is the far future of Humanity...



The Long Night is over... The Settled Worlds have entered a time of renaissance where re-discoveries of lost science and technologies have granted a new opportunity for life amongst the stars...

But even as the ships of the Primean Commonwealth and the Colonial League, the greatest powers of the Settled Worlds, reach out to once again explore the depths of space new threats are also beginning to emerge...

For on the other side of the Great Deep a new power is stirring, growing ever stronger in a thirst for galactic dominion...

And this new fear has a name...

The Gladitorial Axis...

And they are coming, coming to conquer the Settled Worlds...

It is only a matter of time...

THE COMING OF THE GREAT GALACTIC WARS

It is the approximately the year 10,000 AD...

Many of the worlds in man's galaxy have been visited, thousands of planets explored...

But few of the dusty and inhospitable worlds have yielded places for humanity to settle...

So the struggle of life continues...

Strange civilizations have been encountered...

Empires have risen and fallen...

Eras of light and darkness have traded off as though part of some great cosmic destiny...

And now two successor civilizations have emerged...

The Settled Worlds and the Gladitorial Axis...

There are numerous alien species spread throughout the stars...

Some hostile and some welcoming...

But nearly all mysterious in their dealings with humankind...

A conflict arises with a race called the Sarlicons...

They emerge almost unnoticed out of the Great Divide, the nearly starless void...

Their attack is brutal and efficient and the campaign to end the threat they pose is costly for the Settled Worlds...

The Unified Fleet achieves a costly victory and the Sarlicons become a protectorate of the Commonwealth...

But this war has brought evidence of another larger power across the gulf of the Divide that is watching, plotting and preparing to attack...

It is against this backdrop that our story begins...

The story of war coming to engulf the Settled Worlds...

The story of the Great Galactic Wars...

ASTRAL EMPIRES

Background Considerations for Gaming the 10,000 AD Time Period

Astral Empires began 25 years ago. No, really it did. It sprang to life the day after this author encountered a new phenomenon in his life: science fiction. Quite literally the next day after being introduced to this fascinating storytelling methodology the author rolled out of bed and began writing. Well, cartooning actually. That was the day Astral Empires was born. In the time between then and now, the author has explored hundreds of speculative fictional worlds in books, television programs and the silver screen. All of it has had some resonance, some influence on this universe and all of it has become a part of Astral Empires in one small way or another.

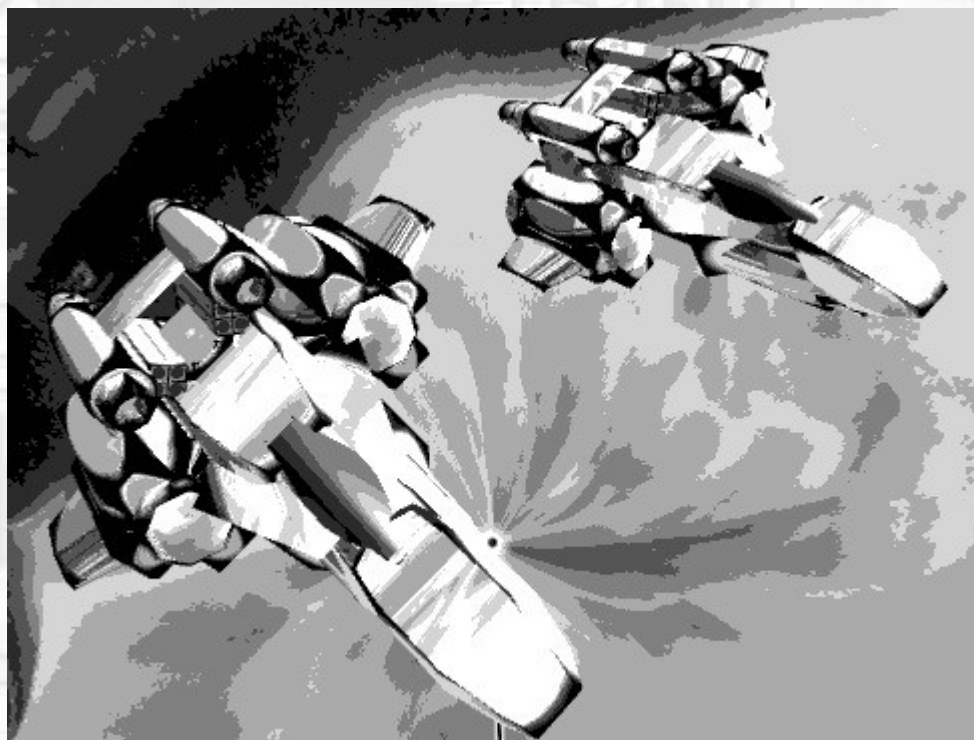
Because of this, Astral Empires is a huge world-building project and covers at least 23 sub-settings, so it is important to note that the material contained in this book focuses on a single era of that expansive timeline: 10,000 AD. In general, during the 10,000 AD era most races are either organized into the loose Unified Fleetworlds or crushed beneath the power of the awesome Gladitorial Axis (with a massive gulf of empty space called the "Great Divide" or Cygnian Rift separating the two powers), but there are many unaligned worlds as well.

Each individual race maintains its own form of governmental control throughout its sphere of influence, by and large, with the Fleetworlds and Axis fighting for influence over all of the Settled Worlds. The broad strokes of the universe are laid out for the players, but few specific details are offered in order that the individual Galaxy Master (GM) can make sub-settings and story arcs that fit within the setting. A few things to take note of, however, are as follows:

- There are humans and aliens in both Fleetworlds and those of the Axis.
- Because of the fracturing of galactic civilization in the past, just about any type of speculative fictional setting can be found. For example, a world defined by the rules of hard science fiction may be in a particular star system right next to a "space opera" soft science fantasy setting just a couple of light years away. Truly, anything can happen in the ASTRAL EMPIRES universe.
- A number of races (mostly non-PC races) are involved in the backstory of the universe and will occasionally be encountered. These races will often be either much higher or much lower on the Tech Level scale and should be used prudently to avoid unbalancing a game campaign.
- Lastly, it is quite possible to import characters, ships, etc. from other eras or settings into the 10,000 AD era by use of the various Temporal Nexuses present throughout deep space. It is not uncommon for a ship from 02200 AD or 05000 AD or even 08576 AD to fall into one of these strange features and emerge in another time.... 10,000 AD perhaps?

BASICS OF THE ASTRAL EMPIRES UNIVERSE

As you begin reading this book you will notice references throughout to various divergent Astral Empires Eras. That is, distinct time periods each marked by different setting styles and technological assumptions and the fiction and game play that occurs. However, all time periods are connected by one meta-plot which is the rise of humanity from a small backworld in the far reaches of the galaxy to the dominant force in this corner of the universe by 50,000 AD. Astral Empires is the story of how we get there.



Colonial starfighter pilots are considered by many to be the best in their field.

ADAPTING ASTRAL EMPIRES TO YOUR OWN CAMPAIGN

Many gamers will come to Astral Empires with their own background universe and set of science fiction assumptions. We understand that and encourage bringing your ideas into this game and its various settings. The idea is to empower you to create exactly what you're looking for, yet offer you a universe with some of the important aspects sketched out for you so you don't have to create everything from scratch. Also, as Astral Empires is built on the common themes of the science fiction genre it should be easy to adapt material from our universe into other games or bring material from other settings and systems into this one.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This book provides the fundamentals tools necessary to play in the *Astral Empires* science fiction setting using *West End Games'* well-known *OpenD6 System* roleplaying game rules. If you're reading this book, you are probably quite familiar with roleplaying games. In case you need a refresher or to explain it to your friends, we suggest telling them that this is an interactive storytelling game wherein they play the part of major characters in the story. If that rouses their curiosity, let them read this introduction. You might also want to start with this introduction if you've played before getting this book but it wasn't with the *OpenD6 System*.

What Is a Roleplaying Game?

A roleplaying game is very much like improvisational acting or interactive storytelling- but with rules. Many video games are like this, and there are plenty of online interactive worlds, so chances are good that you know what a roleplaying game is about. This roleplaying game, however, doesn't need any expensive equipment, special software or cartridges, or a connection to the Internet.

What Do I Need to Play?

To play this game, you need this book, some paper, something to write with, some six-sided dice, a lot of imagination, and a group of people, one of whom is willing to act as the guiding force in the game. This person is called many things, but "Galaxy Master" serves well as short-hand for someone who presents information about the game setting, creates obstacles for the other players to overcome, takes the part of the people the players encounter, and adjudicates the rules. The rest of the group, simply called "the players," take on roles of major characters in the story that they and the Galaxy Master create together.

The stories are called "adventures," or "scenarios." Very short adventures, usually encompassing only one or two obstacles to a simple goal, are referred to as "encounters." A series of encounters can become an adventure, while a series of adventures can turn into a campaign. This book has a companion work called *The Astral Empires Galaxy Master's Guide* containing a chapter (called "Adventure Tips") on how to come up with adventures. It is included in the starter set with this book along with the *Astral Empires Interstellar Arsenal Technology Guide*. In addition, additional adventure books will be published by Port Nova Media in support of the various Astral Empires RPG settings.

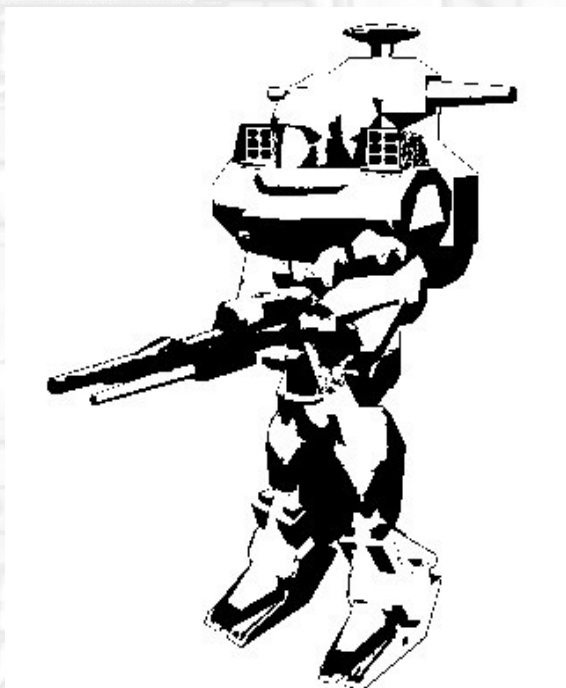


Where Do I Go Next?

Will you be you joining a game where everyone else knows how to play, and you don't have a lot of time to learn the rules? Read Chapter 1, "Character Basics" and then flip to the *Astral Empires* character templates later on in this book. Ask your particular Galaxy Master which one or ones you can use. Fill in the template as you learned from Chapter 1, then take the sheet to the game session and start playing. The rest of the players will teach the details as you go along.

Do you have some time to learn the rules, but you don't want to be the Galaxy Master? Read all of the chapters up through the "Healing" chapter. In this introduction is a solitaire adventure that will get you started on the basics; the rest of the chapters fill in more details. Then skip to the "Equipment" chapter. If you want to play someone with the ability to manipulate the energy of universe, you'll also need to read the "Metaphysics" chapter.

Do you want to be the Galaxy Master, with all its responsibilities and privileges? You'll need to read this entire book, or at least through the "Healing" chapter and skim the rest. Then use the "Adventure Tips" chapter in the GM Guide (or pick up the *Astral Empires: Adventures Guide*) to have the tools to design your own scenario. After that, invite some friends over, introduce them to creating characters, and start having fun! Remember, no matter what having fun is the most important goal!



Alpha Marines always seem to draw the toughest assignments whenever humanity is threatened by genocidal destruction.

SYSTEM OVERVIEW

This overview provides basic concepts essential to roleplaying with the *OpenD6 System*. The concepts presented herein are further explained in the rest of this book, and an introductory adventure will give you a chance to try out what you've learned here.

Reality

The *OpenD6 System* rules are not meant to reflect the real world's reality. Rather, they have been designed to model science fiction reality. That is they attempt to recreate the reality of stories, television shows, comic books, and movies. Galaxy Masters who want to use this system to describe the real world will need to add their own modifiers and limits.

Making Actions

Each player has a character with attributes and skills that describe how well he or she can perform various actions. Attributes represent a character's innate abilities, while skills are specific applications of those abilities.

Most game mechanics in the *OpenD6 System* involve rolling some six-sided dice. A **die code** associated with each attribute and skill represents how good the character is in that area. A die code associated with a weapon shows how much harm it can cause. The larger the number, the more experienced, trained, or naturally adept your character is, or the more deadly the weapon, or the more useful the equipment.

Each die code indicates the number of six-sided dice you roll when you want your character to do something (1D, 2D, 3D, 4D, 5D, etc.), and sometimes an amount (called pips) of "+1" or "+2," which is added to the total result you roll on the dice.

Example: If your character's Strength attribute is 3D+1, when you have her try to lift a cargo container, you would roll three dice and add 1 to the total to get her result.

To represent the randomness of life (and the tons of little modifiers that go along with it), every time you roll dice, make sure that one of them is of a different color than the others. This special die is the **Wild Die**, and it can have some interesting effects on your dice total. (If you only have one die to roll, then that die is the Wild Die.)

If the Wild Die comes up as a 2, 3, 4, or 5, add the result to the other dice normally. If the Wild Die comes up as a 6, this is a **Critical Success**. Add the 6 to your other dice results and roll the Wild Die again. As long as you roll a 6, you keep adding the 6 and you keep rolling. If you roll anything else, you add that number to the total and stop rolling. If the Wild Die comes up as a 1 on the first roll, this is a **Critical Failure**. Tell the Galaxy Master, who will let you know whether or not to add it to your total.

The higher you roll, the better your character accomplishes the task at hand. When your character tries doing something, the Galaxy Master decides on the required skill and a Difficulty based on the task's complexity. The Galaxy Master doesn't usually tell you the Difficulty number you need to equal or beat to succeed. He often won't inform you which tasks are easier and which are harder, though he

might give you hints. ("Hmmm, catching your grappling hook around that small outcropping is going to be pretty hard....") The Galaxy Master then uses the rules to interpret the die roll and determine the results of the action.

Taking Damage

The Galaxy Master decides on one of two ways of determining how much damage a character can take: *Body Points* or *Wounds*.

With the Body Points system, each character has a certain number of Body Points (which are figured out when you create your character). You subtract the amount of damage the attacker rolls for his weapon from the total number of Body Points your character has.

With the Wounds system, each character has a certain number of Wounds. You roll your character's Strength while the attacker rolls damage. Compare the difference between the damage and the Strength roll a Wounds level chart; the chart lets you know how many Wounds your character gets from the attack.

In either system, when your character has no more Body Points or Wounds left, she's toast.

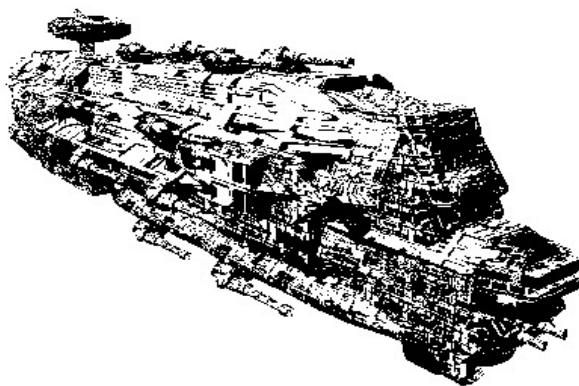
Improving Rolls

In addition to scores for a character's attributes and skills, she has *Fate Points* and *Character Points*. You can spend these points in particularly difficult and heroic situations.

When you spend a Character Point, you get to roll one extra die when you character tries to complete a task. You may choose to spend a Character Point after you've made a roll (in case you want to improve your result).

When you spend a Fate Point, that means your character is using all of her concentration to try to succeed. You may spend a Fate Point only before any die rolls are made. Doing so doubles the number of dice you'd normally roll, usually for one round and one action only, though the Galaxy Master may allow players to spend more Fate Points in particularly challenging moments. This allows the character to do one action really well.

Once a Character Point or Fate Point is used, it's gone. You gain more Character Points at the end of a game for completing goals and playing well. You may get back Fate Points at the end of the game if they were used at a brave, heroic, or climactic moment.



Try It Out!

Now that you have the basics down, let's try out a short scenario. First, you'll need a character. On the next two pages, you'll find a template describing a sample character. Most of the game characteristic information is filled in. The attributes and skills are listed and the attributes names – *Agility*, *Strength*, *Knowledge*, *Perception*, *Mechanical*, *Technical*, and *Metaphysics* – are printed in bold above the skill names. There are more skills in the game than the ones listed on this sheet, but these are the ones commonly associated with the type of profession this template is supposed to represent.

On the second page are more characteristics. *Fate Points* and *Character Points* show the number of these special roll-improving bonuses your character currently has. This quick encounter doesn't require using any of these.

You'll also notice that there are *Advantages*, *Disadvantages*, *Special Abilities*, and a description of your character. These give you an idea about the kind of character that you're playing. The equipment paragraph lists the items your character can use during the game.

Below the description of the character, you'll find "Funds" and "Credits," which are two similar methods of measuring how much wealth your character can usually get at without too much Difficulty. On the next line is "Strength Damage," which shows how much harm your character can cause with brute force. Next to Strength Damage is "Move." This characteristic lists the number of meters your character can easily walk in five seconds.

Below that are *Body Points*, *Wound levels*, and the related *Body Point* ranges for your character. Each of these represents how much injury your character can take. This short adventure won't use Wounds or the Body Points range, so you can ignore them. Instead, you only need to use your Body Points number.

Now that you can find your way around a character template, let's fill in the missing game characteristics. To keep it easy, pick seven skills that you want your character to have experience or training in. Look at the die code next to the attribute that the first skill is listed under, and add one to the number in front of the "D." Write this new die code next to the skill. Do this for each of the seven skills you picked.

Example: If you decided to put 1D in climb/jump, your score for climb/jump would be your Strength score plus one, or 4D+1.

Then fill in the top of the sheet, if you'd like, with your character's name and other details.

In addition to your character sheet, you'll need a pencil and some six-sided dice, one of which should be a different color or size than the others. This special die is your Wild Die. As you go through this scenario, don't read the sections in order. Instead, start with number 1, make a selection, and read the section where your selection tells you to go. Keep doing that until you get to section 15, which is the end. Then you'll be ready for your first *D6 Space* adventure!

Already Have a Character?

If you already have a *OpenD6 System* character — from another *OpenD6 System* game or because you created a new one using the rules in this book — you can still play this adventure. Simply skip to the "Station Visit" section and follow the directions.

Sample Character

Character Name: _____

Occupation: **Bounty Hunter**

Species: **Human**

Gender: _____

Physical Description: _____

Description: When a planetary government needs assistance in bringing someone to justice, they contact you. The locales vary, and the chase excites you. Most people don't know your identity, but you suppose that one day you might find a relative of a criminal that you brought in — and it might not be pleasant.

Agility 3D+1

Acrobatic -----
Brawling -----
Dodge -----
Firearm -----
Melee Combat -----
Running -----
Sleight of Hand -----
Throwing -----

Strength 3D+1

Climb/Jump -----
Lift -----
Stamina -----
Swim -----

Knowledge 2D+2

Aliens -----
Astrography -----
Bureaucracy -----
Business -----
Cultures -----
Intimidation -----
Languages -----
Scholar -----
Security Regulation -----
Streetwise -----
Survival -----
Willpower -----

Metaphysics 0D

Mechanical 2D+1

Comm -----
Gunnery -----
Navigation -----
Piloting -----
Vehicle Operation -----

Perception 3D+1

Bargain -----
Con -----
Forgery -----
Gambling -----
Hide -----
Investigation -----
Know-How -----
Persuasion -----
Search -----
Sneak -----

Technical 3D

Armor Repair -----
Comp. Interface/Repair -----
Demolitions -----
Firearms Repair -----
Medicine -----
Personal Equip. Repair -----
Robot Interface/Repair -----
Security -----

Advantages: Authority: Law (Rank 1), bounty hunter's license; Wealth (Rank 1)

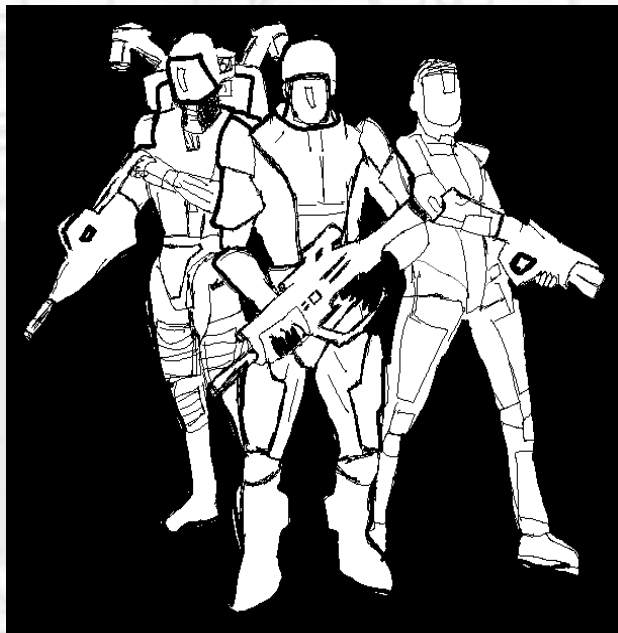
Disadvantages: Sense of Duty (Rank 2), you go to great lengths to get the person you've been hired to bring in
Special Abilities: None

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Equipment: Synthleather jacket (Armor Value +1), loose exercise clothes, cred-key on a strap around your neck and under your jacket

Fate Points	1
Character Points	5
Funds	30
Credits	525
Strength Damage	20
Move	10
Body Points	33

Body Points	Range
Stunned	19-26
Wounded	13-18
Severely Wounded	6-12
Incapacitated	3-5
Mortally Wounded	1-2
Dead	0



Bounty hunting jobs can be quite exciting, but are also usually quite dangerous.

STATION VISIT

(The following sample is from the Core OpenD6 Space Rules and is presented to allow you an opportunity to get a feel for the rules and how they work.)



1

After a long voyage you like a little relaxation- like a holo-boxing session at the station gym... or maybe a long swim, if they have a pool. As soon as you get off the ship, you find a room on station, change into exercise clothes, and head out. As your ship came in at an odd hour, there aren't many people on the promenade, and the stores only show their auto-displays. You pause in front of one, realizing that the man a few meters from you isn't also out for a late-night stroll. You're being sized up.

Before you decide what to do, let's find out who goes first: go to 12.

2

You rolled a Critical Failure on the Wild Die. Take away the one and your highest number. Read the result on the remaining die, and add any pips if your Perception die code included them. (If you're using the Bounty Hunter sample character, then you add 1 to the number on the die.)

Go to 5.

3

The man seems shaken by your talk. He opens his mouth to say something, then merely spits at you and slinks off.

Go to 13.

4

Looks like the stalker anticipated your move, because he steps out of the way just as your fist is about to connect with his face. "You ain't much of a bounty hunter," he scoffs. "You can't be the one that brought my brother in." He shoves you for good measure and stomps off down the promenade.

Go to 13.

5

The stalker must have had a plan in mind before starting to approach you. Before you can react, he rushes forward to punch you, yelling, "You scum bounty hunter! I'm going to get you for what you did to my brother!" His wild swing connects with your stomach, causing you to stagger a step. Let's find out how much that's going to hurt. Your ability to resist damage, called your damage resistance total, equals the Armor Value of any protection you're wearing (like your coat) plus any other modifiers. Since there are no other modifiers, your damage resistance total equals 1 (which is the Armor Value of the coat). Your adversary did four points of damage with his .st. So, the total amount of injury you take equals the tough's damage total minus your damage resistance total, or three points. Subtract three points from the total number of Body Points you have.

That's not even enough to knock the wind out of you. Now it's your turn.

If you want to talk him out of his intentions to harm you, go to 7.

If you think he'll only listen to force, go to 9.

6

You rolled a Critical Success on the Wild Die. Add the 6 to the total of the other dice, and roll only the Wild Die again. As long as you get a 6 on the Wild Die, keep adding that 6 to the total and roll the die again. If you get any other number- even a 1- simply add that number to the total you already have. (If you're using the Bounty Hunter sample character, then you add a 1 to the final total.)

Go to 10.

7

You stop and stare through slitted eyes at the man as he approaches you. "Some reason you're following me, sir?"

"You're the bounty hunter that threw my brother in jail, ain't you?" spits the man in a gruff voice. "I want your hide."

"If I got your brother, what makes you think you can get me? Let's be reasonable here. If you've got a problem with what happened to your brother, take it up with the authorities he's in custody with. Why don't we find a bar and I buy you a drink?"

Look at your character sheet and find *Intimidation* (under *Knowledge*) or *Persuasion* (under *Perception*) If you put extra dice in either of these, look at the die code next to the skill name. If you didn't, then look at the die code of its governing attribute. Take a number of dice equal to the number in front of the "D" of whichever one you're using; make sure one of those dice is the Wild Die. Roll the dice. If the Wild Die is a 1, take it away as well as the highest die and add the rest of them. If the Wild Die is a 6, add the 6, re-roll the Wild Die, and keep adding and re-rolling as long you get a 6 (otherwise, just add the number to the rest of the total). If it's anything else on the Wild Die, add together the results of all of the dice.

If the total on the dice is greater than or equal to 15, go to 3.

If the total on the dice is less than 15, go to 14.

8

You quickly approach the stalker and give him a quick and sharp jab on the jaw. He looks at you with surprise, then anger. "I'll get you next time, bounty hunter!" he screams as he runs off.

Go to 13.

9

You're not going to waste any more time with this guy. A little violence ought to shake him up enough to leave you alone. Look at your character sheet and find *Brawling*. If you put extra dice in this skill, look at the die code next to the skill name. If you didn't, then look at the die code of the governing attribute, *Agility*. Take a number of dice equal to the number in front of the "D" of whichever one you're using; make sure one of those dice is the Wild Die. Roll the dice. If the Wild Die is a 1, take it away as well as the highest die and add the rest of them. If the Wild Die is a 6, add the 6, re-roll the Wild Die, and keep adding and re-rolling as long you get a 6 (otherwise, just add the number to the rest of the total). If it's anything, else on the Wild Die, add together the results of all of the dice.

If the total on the dice is greater than or equal to 5, go to 8.

If the total on the dice is less than 5, go 4.

10

You're a little quicker at assessing the situation than the stalker is. You get the chance to do something before he can react. What do you want to do?

If you want to talk him with him, go to 7.

If you think he'll only listen to force, go to 9.

11

Since you didn't get a 1 or 6 on the Wild Die, simply total the dice and add any pips if your *Perception* die code included them. (If you're using the Bounty Hunter character, then you add a 1 to the total on the dice.)

If the Perception total is greater than or equal to 6, go to 10.

If the Perception total is less than 6, go to 5.

12

To find out who's got the faster reactions in this combat encounter, look at your character sheet and find *Perception* and the die code next to it. Take a number of dice equal to the number in front of the "D"; make sure one of those dice is the Wild Die (and differently colored from the rest). So, if the die code is 3D+1, you would have two regular dice and one Wild Die. Roll the dice and then select the option that matches the results on the Wild Die.

If you rolled a 1 on the Wild Die, go to 2.

If you rolled a 6 on the Wild Die, go to 6.

If you rolled any number other than a 1 or a 6, go to 11.

13

That was an unpleasant encounter. Not unusual, considering your work, but nothing you ever enjoy no matter how many times it happens. You decide to return your room and get a little rest instead of risking another encounter.

Go to 15.

14

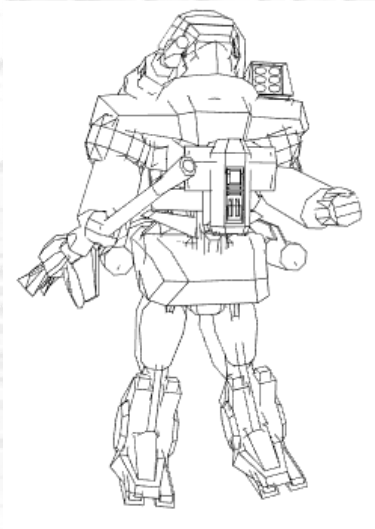
He sneers at your ridiculous statement, and he rushes forward to punch you. His wild swing connects with your stomach, causing you to stagger a step. Let's find out how much that's going to hurt. Your ability to resist damage, called your damage resistance total, equals the Armor Value of any protection you're wearing (like your coat) plus any other modifiers. Since there are no other modifiers, your damage resistance total equals 1 (which is the Armor Value of the coat). The stranger did four points of damage with his fist. So, the total amount of injury you take equals your adversary's damage total minus your damage resistance total, or three points. Subtract three points from the total number of Body Points you have. That's not even enough to knock the wind out of you.

"You ain't much of a bounty hunter," he scoffs. "You can't be the one that brought my brother in." He shoves you for good measure and stomps off down the promenade.

Go to 13.

15

In a full-length adventure, you'd have a lot more choices, but hopefully, this short adventure gave you an idea of how the game works. If you're unsure, go back through the scenario, picking different answers and, probably, making different die rolls. When you think you're ready, you can use the Bounty Hunter character to play in other adventures with your friends, or you can go to Chapter 1 and learn how to make your own character. Happy adventuring!



KEY TERMS

These definitions provide you with a general idea of what each term means; they are described in more detail within the book. Terms italicized within each definition refer to another entry within this glossary.

Action: A task that the character undertakes or something that the character does, like give a speech or climb a wall.

Active Defense Value: A number the character gets when concentrating on getting out of the way of an attack.

Armor Value: A die code representing the amount of protection a defensive covering provides. It can help determine the *damage resistance total*. This term is sometimes abbreviated AV.

Body Points: One of two ways of indicating the amount of injury a character can sustain, listed as a number. The damage total is subtracted from the character's current Body Point total. May be used alone or with *Wounds*.

Character Point: A bonus representing a surge of adrenaline or that extra luck the main characters of a story seem to have. Allows the user to roll an additional *Wild Die*.

Combat Difficulty: A number representing how challenging it is to attack someone or something. It equals the *active defense value* or the *passive defense value*.

Complementary Skill: A skill whose results could aid in the use of another skill.

Creation points: Points used when designing a character to purchase die codes in game characteristics or other features that represent the character's abilities, experience, and background.

Critical Failure: A result, represented by a 1, on the Wild Die that indicates something bad has occurred.

Critical Success: A result, represented by a 6, on the Wild Die that indicates something good has happened. Generally, the player adds the 6 to the current total and rolls again, adding and re-rolling as long as a 6 comes up.

D (as in "1D"): An abbreviation for "six-sided dice." The number in front of the "D" is part of the die code, and lets you know how many six-sided dice to roll.

Damage Resistance Total: A number that indicates how much injury a character or object can absorb, soak, or deflect.

Damage Total: A number representing how much injury or destruction something has caused.

Defaulting to an Attribute: Using the die code for an attribute when the character doesn't have a higher die code in the needed skill.

Die Code, Score: The number of six-sided dice players roll (1D, 2D, 3D, 4D, 5D, etc.), and sometimes an amount (called pips) of "+1" or "+2" that is added to the total result that came up on the dice. "Die code" and "score" are used interchangeably.

Difficulty: A number representing how challenging it is to perform an action.

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Fate Point: A bonus representing that a character is using all of her concentration to try to succeed. Allows the player to, at least, double the number of dice on one roll. Sometimes the Galaxy Master will provide other benefits.

Free Action: Any action that needs only a few seconds to perform or do, such as taking a few steps or glancing quickly around a room.

Modifier: A number or die code that is added or subtracted from another number or die code to represent a change in the typical situation.

Opposed Difficulty, Opposed Roll: A Difficulty that applies when one character resists another character's action. In this case, both characters roll die codes related to the activity and compare them.

Passive Defense Value: A number representing a character's innate ability to get out of the way of danger. It usually equals 10.

Pip: An added bonus to the total result that came up on the dice. A "+1" means one is added to the total, while "+2" means two is added.

Range (in combat): The distance from the attacker to the target.

Result Points: The difference between the total rolled with an attribute's or skill's die code and the Difficulty of an action.

Result Point Bonus: Usually, one-half (rounded up) of the *result points* figured for an action. It sometimes may be used to affect other rolls.

Round: A unit of time equal to five seconds in the game world. Figuring out what happens in a round can take longer.

Scale: A game mechanic representing that opponents of vastly different sizes can affect each other differently in combat.

Standard Difficulty: A number, generally selected from a chart, assigned to an action based on how challenging it is.

Strength Damage: A die code representing the amount of harm a character can do because of his or her physical prowess.

Toughness: A die code representing the amount of damage an object can take, similar to a character's Physique attribute.

Unskilled modifier, Untrained modifier: A modifier added to an action's Difficulty that represents the increased Difficulty of doing something without the right training or experience. The terms are used interchangeably.

Wild Die: A six-sided die, of a different color or size from other dice used, that represents the randomness of life, with the 1 and the 6 indicating a special result (see *Critical Failure* and *Critical Success*).

Wounds: One of two ways of indicating the amount of injury a character can sustain, listed as a level. The level is determined by comparing the difference between the damage total and the damage resistance total to a chart. May be used alone or with *Body Points*.

CHAPTER 2: CHARACTER BASICS

WHAT'S IN THIS CHAPTER

This chapter covers three methods of character creation and provides an overview of the attributes and skills available to characters. If you've made a character already, skip past "*Character Creation*" to "*Attributes*" and skim the rest of the chapter, adjusting your character if necessary.

CHARACTER CREATION

To make a character, you'll need to select a template from within this book or another *OpenD6* game, or make your own. A blank character sheet also is included at the end of this book. You can either photocopy your chosen sheet, or copy the information onto a separate piece of paper.

Templates

A few starting templates have been provided at the end of this book. To get started right away, pick one and distribute seven skill dice among the skills listed; the dice for attributes have already been done for you. Note that the listed skills are the ones that type of character might typically have, though you could include others not on the list if you'd like.

For skill descriptions and details on how to distribute skill dice, see the "Skills" section later in this chapter.

If desired, you can fill in the other character features (such as gender, age, and so on) and provide any additional notes on the character's history. There is no need to purchase equipment, as that has already been figured for the characters.

If you choose a template from another *OpenD6* game, you may need to make some adjustments in the types of skills a character based on that might have. Check the list herein to make sure the template's skills are described in this *OpenD6* version. If one is not, either cross it off the template or substitute a similar skill that does exist.

Once you have finished filling in your template, you can either start playing the game with your group, or you can skip to the "Game Basics" chapter and read more on how to use your new character.

Defined Limits

If you wish to make your own starting character from scratch, without a template but with defined limits on what can be put into attributes and skills, use these guidelines. This chapter describes each characteristic in more detail, including examples on how you can split the dice.

These guidelines assume you'll make a normal Human character. If not, talk with your Galaxy Master about the minimums, maximums, and other requirements for the character species you want to use.

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See the various sections in this chapter for details on dice distribution and figuring out other aspects of your character.

Attributes: Distribute 18 dice among the seven attributes. The minimum is 1D and the maximum is 5D in all attributes except Extra-normal attributes, which remains at 0D for most characters.

Skills: Distribute seven dice among the skills. The maximum number of dice added to any one skill is 3D.

Move: This equals 10 meters per round.

Body Points: If your Galaxy Master is using this characteristic, roll your character's Strength and add 20 to the total. Ignore this characteristic if your Galaxy Master is using Wounds only.

Wounds: If your Galaxy Master relies on the Wound levels option with Body Points, see the appropriate table in the "Damage" chapter to determine the range of Body Points associated with each Wound level. If your Galaxy Master uses Wounds only, you don't need to figure out the Body Points range; you can put a line through that column if you'd like.

Strength Damage: Drop the pips from your character's Strength or lift score (including any Special Abilities or Disadvantages that affect the die code), divide the number by 2, and round up. This is the Strength Damage die code.

Funds and Credits: Funds and credits measure how much wealth your character can usually get at without too much trouble. All characters start with a base Funds die code of 3D. Look under "Funds" in this chapter for modifiers to this roll and how to convert this number to cash. The cash equivalent of Funds goes on the Credits line.

Character Points: Characters start with five Character Points.

Fate Points: Characters start with one Fate Point.

For equipment, Advantages, Disadvantages, Special Abilities, background, and character features, see the appropriate sections in this chapter for more details on how to fill out these optional sections.

Creation Point Pool

Those who wish to use points to create their characters, rather than following a template or being restricted in what they can put in skills and attributes, can use a point system. Each novice character receives 79 creation points to distribute among all the options. Players may only spend creation points as whole points, not fractions. See the "Attribute" and "Skills" sections in this chapter for details on distributing dice.

One attribute die equals four creation points.

One skill die equals one creation point.

Three skill specialization dice equal one creation point.

Advantages and Special Abilities have their own costs associated with them; see the "Character Options" chapter for details.

Other restrictions apply:

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Attributes have a minimum of 1D and a maximum of 5D, except in Extranormal attributes (which may have a minimum of 0D).

The maximum starting number of dice that may be added to any one skill or specialization of skill is 3D.

Players of Human characters may add up to 1D additional creation points to their totals by taking an appropriate number of ranks in Disadvantages. Non-Human species may have their own creation point totals, maximum number of points from Disadvantages, and starting Advantages, Disadvantages, and Special Abilities.

For worlds involving more Special Abilities, Galaxy Masters should feel free to raise the number of starting creation points and the number of possible creation points received from Disadvantages.

Characters also receive the following aspects, like those created with defined limits:

Move: This equals 10 meters per round.

Body Points: If your Galaxy Master includes this characteristic, roll your character's Strength and add 2D to the total. Ignore this characteristic if your Galaxy Master is using Wounds only.

Wounds: If your Galaxy Master relies on the Wound levels option with Body Points, see the appropriate table in the "Damage" chapter to determine the range of Body Points associated with each Wound level. If your Galaxy Master uses Wounds only, you don't need to figure out the Body Points range; you can put a line through that column if you'd like.

Strength Damage: Drop the pips from your character's Strength or lift score (including any Special Abilities or Disadvantages that affect the die code), divide the number by 2, and round up. This is the Strength Damage die code.

Funds and Credits: Funds and credits measure how much wealth your character can usually get at without too much trouble. All characters start with a base Funds die code of 3D. Look under "Funds" in this chapter for modifiers to this roll and how to convert this number to cash. The cash equivalent of Funds goes on the Credits line.

Galaxy Master's Characters

Galaxy Master's characters (sometimes referred to as non-player characters or NPCs) may or may not be created using the same rules as players' characters. Because the Galaxy Master's characters serve as interactive elements in the story, it all depends on the NPC's importance to the storyline. Minor Galaxy Master's characters have fewer attribute and skill dice, fewer Body Points or Wounds, and few (if any) character options, Character Points, or Fate Points. Major characters, however, should follow the same guidelines as the players' characters, possibly having more skill dice, Advantages, Disadvantages, and Special Abilities than a typical starting player's character.

An increase over the players' characters reflects the fact that a major antagonist has been around much longer.

Creating Experienced Characters

If you are making an experienced character, you'll need to figure out how many more years that character has been around than one starting out.

By Defined Limits

Using the initial novice totals of seven skill dice, five Character Points, and one Fate Point, add 15 skill dice, 15 Character Points, and two Fate Points to the initial totals for each year the character has been a full-time active adventurer. (For part-timers, halve these figures, rounding up.)

By Creation Point Pool

With the initial novice totals of 79 creation points, five Character Points, and one Fate Point as a starting point, add 15 creation points, 15 Character Points, and two Fate Points for each year the character has been a full-time active adventurer. (For part-timers, halve these figures, rounding up.) Unless the Galaxy Master decides otherwise, there are no maximums for skills and Disadvantages.

Creating Existing Characters

Players basing their characters on existing fictional entities should ignore the skill and Disadvantage limits and, with their Galaxy Master's approval, create the character by distributing dice as best reflects how the character appears in his, her, or its stories.

ATTRIBUTES

Each character has seven attributes, which measure basic physical and mental abilities that are common to every living creature (and some nonliving things), no matter what universe or dimension they exist in.

Agility: A measure of how physically articulate your character is, including his eye-hand coordination and agility.

Strength: Measure of your character's physical power and ability to resist damage.

Mechanical: Your character's prowess at operating mechanical equipment like vehicles, shields, spaceships, and sensors.

Knowledge: Measure of your character's overall intelligence.

Perception: Your character's awareness of himself and things around him, including the ability to interact with others.

Technical: Your character's ability to manipulate, repair, and modify technology.

Extrnormal: Measure of a character's extraordinary abilities. In *OpenD6 Space*, Metaphysics is the only Extrnormal attribute, although game-masters looking for more options (such as psionics) may wish to consult other the system in the next chapter. It is often listed by its type, rather than by the term "Extrnormal." Most characters begin with a score of 00, since people with such abilities are extremely rare. Those who have an Extrnormal attribute must decide how it's manifested. Characters almost never have more than one Extrnormal attribute.

When you put dice in an attribute, you can either put whole dice in each attribute, or you can give

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each a mixture of whole dice and pips. Each die equals three pips.

Example: You've distributed most of your attribute dice, but you have four dice left to put in Perception and Technical. You could put 1D in Perception and 3D in Technical, or 1D+2 in Perception and 2D+1 in Technical, or some similar combination.

Extrnormal is the only attribute in which a Human character may have no dice; there is no maximum that a Human character may have in this attribute. No Human character may have less than 1D or more than 5D in any other attribute. Other species have other minimums and maximums, which are either listed with the species description or specified by the Galaxy Master.

SKILLS

Skills are more specific applications of an attribute. For example, the skill *Dodge* is a more specific use of your character's *Agility*. Characters learn them through instruction or experience.

Skills are areas of expertise that are not necessarily common to every living creature. Some creatures simply don't have the capacity to learn certain skills.

All skills beneath a given attribute begin at that attribute's die code. To highlight skills in which the character has trained or has some experience, add pips or dice to the base attribute value.

As with attributes, when creating your character you can either put whole dice in each skill, or you can give each a mixture of whole dice and pips. Remember that each die equals three pips.

Example: You've chosen your attribute scores, including putting 2D+1 in Technical. If you wanted her to be a little better in the Demolitions skill, you could add one pip to the base attribute to get a demolitions skill score of 2D+2. If you decided to add two pips to the base attribute, the demolitions score becomes 3D.

You can also specialize in skills. Specializations reflect a greater familiarity in a particular area covered by a base skill. One skill die equals three specialization dice. Of course, one specialization die still equals three pips.

You don't need to have any extra dice in the base skill in order to take a specialization in that skill, but when you give your character specializations in that manner, they are treated as separate skills. If you give your character specializations in base skills he already has, those specializations are considered bonuses to the base skill when attempting tasks of that type.

Once you've chosen at least one specialization and put one or two pips or dice in it, you have to use the remaining specialization dice and pips to either purchase more pips in the same specialization or purchase one or more pips in other specializations.

You roll the specialization's die code only when you use the specific item or knowledge reflected by the specialization. Otherwise, you roll the base skill (or attribute if you didn't put additional dice in the full skill).

Example: If your character's Technical is 2D+2 and her demolitions is 3D, you could give her a demolitions specialization of vehicles of +1 (which means that, when she's attempting to blow up planetary vehicles, she rolls three dice and adds 1 to the total). You would then have two specialization dice and two specialization pips to place among other specializations. With these, you could further improve her Demolitions: Vehicles specialization,

or you could pick one or more other specializations in the same or other base skills.

You decide that with one other specialization pip, you'll give your character vehicle repair: ground vehicles, but you won't take the full vehicle repair skill for her. This allows your character to have vehicle repair: ground vehicles at 3D (add 1 to the die code of the base attribute, Technical, which is 2D+2). Thus, when your character attempts to fix a hovercraft, you roll 3D, but if she tries to make adjustments to a boat, you only rely on the attribute's score, which is 2D+2.

A character may not have dice in any skill associated with an Extra-normal attribute unless he already has dice in that attribute.

The maximum number of dice the character may start with in any base skill is 3D greater than the governing attribute, with no more than 3D greater than the base skill in any specialization.

You can find the list of skills, with definitions, on the next two pages.

Focused Skills

Some Galaxy Masters prefer narrower skill categories, requiring characters to select more specific abilities, such as *Vehicle Operation: Ground* or *Languages: Old Terran*. If that's the case, players' characters start with 21 skill dice or 93 creation points. Players will need to get Galaxy Master approval on any subcategories they choose, while Galaxy Masters need to insure that the subcategories are neither too broad (all scientific disciplines) or too narrow (a particular model of handgun).

Players may take specializations of these narrower skills, as described in the rules.

Skill List

As this skill list includes broad definitions not applicable in all eras or worlds for which this system could be used, the Galaxy Master has the final say on actual skill applications. For difficulties associated with each skill, see the "Example Skill Difficulties" chapter.

Agility

Acrobatics: Performing feats of gymnastics, extraordinary balance, and dance (and related performance arts), as well as breaking falls and escaping from bonds.

Brawling: Competence in unarmed combat.

Dodge: Slipping out of danger's way, whether avoiding an attack or a sprung booby trap.

Firearms: Shooting any gun a person can carry, even if it requires a tripod setup to fire. Covers everything from small slug throwers to shoulder-launched rockets.

Flying/O-G: Maneuvering under on one's own power (such as with wings) or in zero-gravity environments (such as drifting through space in an environmental suit).

Melee Combat: Wielding hand-to-hand weapons.

Missile Weapons: Firing unpowered ranged weapons.

Riding: Controlling and riding domesticated mounts.

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Running: Moving quickly while avoiding obstacles and keeping from stumbling.

Sleight of Hand: Nimbleness with the fingers, including picking pockets, palming items, and opening mechanical locks.

Throwing: Hitting a target accurately with a thrown item, including grenades, stones, and knives. Also used for catching thrown items. (Using or modifying grenades as explosives for special destructive effects requires the demolitions skill.)

Strength

Climb/Jump: Climbing or jumping over obstacles.

Lift: Moving or lifting heavy objects, as well as the ability to inflict additional damage with strength-powered weapons.

Stamina: Physical endurance and resistance to pain, disease, and poison.

Swim: Moving and surviving in a liquid medium

Mechanical

Comm: Effectively using communication devices and arrays.

Exoskeleton Operation: Using single-person conveyances with skills and abilities that substitute for (not augment) the character's own skills and abilities. This skill substitutes for the character's Agility and Strength skills when using the "suit."

Gunnery: Accurately firing weapons mounted on powered armor, vehicles, and spaceships, or within fortresses.

Navigation: Plotting courses, such as through space using a vessel's navigational computer interface, or on land using maps or landmarks, as well as creating maps.

Piloting: Flying air- or space-borne craft, from hovercraft and in-atmosphere fighters to transports and battleships.

Sensors: Operating scanner arrays to gather information about one's surroundings.

Shields: Deploying and redirecting shields aboard vehicles.

Vehicle Operation: Operating non-flying vehicles traveling on or through the ground or a liquid medium.

Knowledge

Aliens: Understanding of aliens not of the character's own species and their physiology, customs, and history.

Astrography: Familiarity with astrographic features (planets, star systems, nebulae), and general knowledge of any civilized elements present (settlements, industry, government, orbital installations).

Bureaucracy: Knowledge of and ability to use a bureaucracy's intricate procedures to gain

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information, and favors, or attain other goals.

Business: Comprehension of business practices and the monetary value of goods and opportunities, including the ability to determine how to make money with another skill the character has. Business can complement bargain when haggling over prices for goods and services being bought or sold.

Cultures: Understanding of the manners, customs, and social expectations of different cultures, including one's own.

Intimidation: Using physical presence, verbal threats, taunts, or fear to influence others or get information out of them.

Languages: Familiarity with and ability to use various forms of communication, including written, spoken, and nonverbal. Characters may choose one "native" language in which they have written and spoken fluency. Additional languages in which a character has proficiency can be represented by specializations of this skill.

Scholar: This skill represents knowledge and/or education in areas not covered under any other skill (such as chemistry, mathematics, archeology, cooking, art, etc.). This may be restricted to a specific field (represented by specializations) or a general knowledge of a wide range of subjects. It is used to remember details, rumors, tales, legends, theories, important people, and the like, as appropriate for the subject in question. However, the broader the category, the fewer the details that can be recalled. It covers what the character himself can recall. Having another skill as a specialization of the scholar skill means that the character knows the theories and history behind the skill but can't actually use it. Scholar can be useful with investigation to narrow a search for information.

Security Regulations: Understanding of how law enforcement organizations, regulations, and personnel operate.

Streetwise: Finding information, goods, and contacts in an urban environment, particularly through criminal organizations, black markets, and other illicit operations. Also useful for determining possible motives and methods of criminals.

Survival: Knowledge of techniques for surviving in hostile, wilderness environments, as well as the ability to handle animals.

Tactics: Familiarity with deploying military forces and maneuvering them to the best advantage.

Willpower: Ability to withstand stress, temptation, other people's interaction attempts, mental attacks, and pain. The Galaxy Master may allow a specialization in a specific faith tradition or belief system to enhance many, though not all, applications of willpower.

Perception

Artist: Making works of art, like paintings, photographs, and music or literary compositions.

Bargain: Haggling over prices for goods and services being bought or sold, as well as using bribery.

Command: Effectively ordering and coordinating others in team situations (such as commanding a battleship crew).

Con: Bluffing, lying, tricking, or deceiving others, as well as verbal evasiveness, misdirection,

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blustering, and altering features or clothing to be unrecognizable or to look like someone else. Also useful in putting on acting performances.

Forgery: Creating and noticing false or altered documentation in various media (paper, electronic, plastic card, etc.), including counterfeiting, though tasks may require other skills to help detect or make the forgery.

Gambling: Winning and cheating at games of strategy and luck.

Hide: Concealing objects, both on oneself and using camouflage.

Investigation: Gathering information, researching topics, analyzing data, and piecing together clues.

Know-How: Figuring out how to perform an action in which the character does not have experience, as well as a catch-all skill encompassing areas not covered by other skills (such as utilitarian sewing or cooking).

Persuasion: Influencing others or getting information out of them through bribery, honest discussion, debate, diplomacy, speeches, friendliness, flattery, or seduction. Also useful in negotiations, business transactions, and putting on performances (such as singing, acting, or storytelling).

Search: Spotting hidden objects or people, reconnoitering, lipreading, eavesdropping on or watching other people, or tracking the trails they've left behind.

Sneak: Moving silently, avoiding detection and hiding oneself.

Technical

Armor Repair: Fixing damaged armor.

Computer Interface/Repair: Programming, interfacing with, and fixing computer systems.

Demolitions: Setting explosives to achieve particular destructive effects.

Exoskeleton Repair: Repairing and modifying exoskeletons, powered armor, environmental suits, and similar suits.

Firearms Repair: Repairing and modifying any gun a person can carry, from small slug throwers to shoulder-launched rockets.

Flight Systems Repair: Fixing damaged systems aboard flying vehicles and spaceships.

Gunnery Repair: Fixing weapons mounted on powered armor, vehicles, or spaceships, or within fortresses.

Medicine: Using basic field medicine to treat injuries, as well as detailed understanding and applying medical procedures, such as diagnosing illnesses, performing surgery, and implanting cybernetics.

Personal Equipment Repair: Fixing small electronic equipment, including damaged cybernetics.

Robot Interface/Repair: Programming, interfacing with and fixing robots and their systems.

Security: Installing, altering, and bypassing electronic security and surveillance systems.

Vehicle Repair: Fixing ground- and ocean-based vehicles that do not fly.

Extrnormal: Metaphysics

Metaphysics is one possible Extrnormal attribute. For specific information, see its chapter in this book.

Channel: Focusing energy within herself and her surroundings to harm others or protect herself and others from harm.

Sense: Detecting anything in existence, learn about her surroundings, and touch and influence minds.

Transform: Altering people and things within the universe, including moving something from one location to another and changing a target's natural capabilities temporarily.

Advantages, Disadvantages, and Special Abilities

Advantages and Disadvantages are benefits or quirks your character has developed. Some affect the character's attributes and skills, while others serve as useful roleplaying tools for rounding out the character. Special Abilities are unusual talents or powers the character has that most other Humans don't have. The next chapter, "*Character Options*," discusses these characteristics. You may ignore this section if you don't want to add them to your character.

Move

This number (usually 10) represents how many meters your character moves in a round at maximum walking speed in standard (1 g) gravity. (The running skill can increase this rate. It also serves as the base for other movement skills.)

Should the character have a different sort of movement than normal (such as fins for legs), see the Hindrance Disadvantage (described in the "Character Options" chapter) for information on how to account for this variability.

Special Points

Players' characters typically start the game with one Fate Point and five Character Points. You can spend these points to improve your character's chance of succeeding in especially difficult situations. (The mechanics of this are discussed in the "Game Basics" chapter.) Character Points alternatively are used to permanently improve skills. Your character earns more Character and Fate Points by having adventures. There is no limit to the number of Character or Fate Points your character may have at any time.

Body Points and Wounds

This section of the character sheet allows you to keep track of the healthiness of your character. Which you use depends on the Galaxy Master.

Determining Body Points

When you create a new character, roll her Strength (including any modifiers from Disadvantages or

Special Abilities) and add 20. (Treat a 1 that comes up on the Wild Die as a 1 and add it to the total as normal; it has no negative effect on the result.) This becomes her Body Point total. Write it on the character sheet in the space provided. Templates already have their Body Points determined.

Example: Your character has 3D+1 in Physique. You roll three dice, making sure one of them is the Wild Die. The dice come up 4 and 6, with a 1 on the Wild Die. Since the 1 has no negative effect, you add the numbers to arrive at a total of 11. You then include the pip bonus of 1 with this for 12. Finally, you add 12 to 20 to get a Body Point total of 32.

Determining Wounds

If your Galaxy Master is using the Wound levels option with Body Points, see the appropriate table in the "Damage" chapter to determine the range of Body Points associated with each Wound level. If your Galaxy Master is only using Wounds, you don't need to figure out the Body Points range; you can put a line through that column if you'd like.

Strength Damage

Strength Damage indicates the amount of harm a character can do in combat with body parts, melee weapons, thrown weapons, and most missile weapons.

Determining Strength Damage

To determine the Strength Damage die code, take the character's Strength or lift (including any die code modifiers from Disadvantages or Special Abilities) and drop the pips. Divide by 2, and round up.

Example: A character with 3D in Strength has a Strength Damage of 2D. A character with 6D+2 in lift has a Strength Damage of 3D.

Templates and Strength Damage

If you added dice to a template's lift skill, you'll need to adjust the Strength Damage value listed. Use the information above to correct the number.

Funds

To allow the Galaxy Master to more easily adjust the "real world" cost to something appropriate for her world or her part of the world, this system substitutes difficulties for the prices of items. Each character thus gets a Funds attribute, which represents the amount of money the character can get without too much trouble on a regular basis because of work or investments.

All characters start with a base of 3 in Funds. Use the accompanying table to adjust this number. Include any modifiers to attributes due to Disadvantages or Special Abilities. The minimum total is 1. The final total becomes the die code in the Funds attribute.

After character creation, a player can increase the Funds attribute by spending Character Points (using the rules in the "Improving Characters" chapter) or through bonuses received as adventure rewards.

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If the Galaxy Master prefers to use cash or its equivalent, multiply the Funds total by a value specified by the Galaxy Master (typically about 175 credits, but Galaxy Masters may increase or decrease this depending on how expensive goods and services are in their universe). This is how much money the character receives per week for whatever sort of work the character does or investments the character has.

Determining Funds

Characteristic	Modifier
1D in Perception	-1
1D in Knowledge	-1
4D or more in Perception	+1
4D or more in Knowledge	+1
8D or more in business skill plus its specializations	+1

Example: Your character has 4D in Knowledge, 6D in Business, and +2D in a specialization of business, Investing. Starting with 3, you add to it 1 for your high Knowledge score and 1 for having at least 8D in business plus a specialization. Your final total is 4, which gives you a Funds score of 5D. If your Galaxy Master preferred cash, you would start with a regular income of 875 credits per week.

Using the Funds attribute is discussed in the "Equipment" chapter.

Equipment

Players of starting characters may select one small weapon and a little protective gear plus a few tools of their characters' chosen trade, unless there is equipment already listed on the template sheet. Some basic equipment is explained in the "Equipment" chapter; the game-master may allow other options.

Character Features and Other Details

The character sheet provided in this book and most other templates include spots for your character's name, career, species, gender, age, height, weight, and other information. Unless specified by the template or your Galaxy Master allows it, your character's species is Human. Everything else in these sections you are free to fill in as you like.

Height and Weight

Players who want their characters significantly larger or smaller than the average Human have a few options. If the size is proportionately larger or smaller, then the character must have the Size Advantage. If the size is a hindrance, then the character should have the Hindrance Disadvantage as well.

CHAPTER 3: CHARACTER OPTIONS

WHAT'S IN THIS CHAPTER

This chapter is for players who want to explore more of their characters' possible backgrounds and abilities. After completing basic character generation in Chapter 1, look through this chapter to "flesh out" your character's history and abilities. You'll find interesting game- and story-related options called Advantages, Disadvantages, and Special Abilities.

These suggest the fact that your character might have knowledge, resources, or abilities that aren't reflected by the character's attributes and skills. If something inspires you to change your character's basic characteristics, feel free to go back and make adjustments.

EXPANDING THE CHARACTER CONCEPT

When you first created your character, you probably had a character concept in mind or one was suggested by the template that you used. Now's the time to expand the character's history.

There are several ways you can do this. The easiest is to answer questions like:

- *Where and when was my character born?*
- *What did my character do as a child?*
- *What unusual experiences did my character have?*
- *How did my character become the character he is now?*
- *What is one of my character's major goals?*
- *What was my character doing right before the game begins?*
- *Why does your character have the skills that he has?*

Say your character knows firearms and several specializations. Why? Was the character in the army? A mercenary? A member of a megacorporation security force? How were these skills learned? You don't have to explain every skill, but try to rationalize any unusual skills (such as Metaphysics skills), as well as skills the character has two dice or more in (he is really good at those).

There are, of course, other questions you can come up with, though these are among the most common.

You can jot down notes and go back and fill in the gaps as you play. You can make up the name of the character's school, the exact date of birth, and other things as you go along. If you're stuck for ideas, read the basic description of the game setting or remember pertinent books, television shows, and movies- you can develop ideas based on them.

Look Over the Character Options

You might not want to write a background for your character until you look at some of the options available to you. Take a look at the Advantages, Disadvantages, and Special Abilities, and see some of the benefits and drawbacks you can choose for your character. You might see something you want to work in, and that will help give you ideas for a background story.

Aliens and Mutants

Galaxy Masters and players can use character options to tweak the starting character Human base into any sort of species concept that they desire. The next chapter, "Aliens and Human offshoots," provides some generic non-Human write-ups and character packages based on them, in addition to questions to help in making new ones.

When creating a species template, every character based on that species must have certain background Special Abilities, Disadvantages, and possibly Advantages. However, enough points should remain with which the player may customize the character. Usually, the character ends up with more options than normal for the average person in the game setting, but fewer than if the player had stuck with Human. (Experienced members of the species should have more skills and, perhaps, higher levels of the template's Special Abilities and Disadvantages.)

Cybernetics and Special Abilities

Mechanical implants exist as the most common means for an unmutated Human (and possibly some other species of the Galaxy Master's devising) to gain Special Abilities. Read the "Cybernetics" chapter for details on how to include Special Abilities in your character by replacing an organic part with a mechanical construct.

Selecting Character Options

Advantages, Disadvantages, and Special Abilities make the character more interesting, more (and less) effective, and more fun to roleplay (if you do it right). You know the story of your character- here's what that story means.

Advantages are perks that the character has because of her status in society, the people she knows, or something in her background. They generally do not directly affect attributes or skills.

Disadvantages hamper the character in some way. They might affect her attributes or skills or they might mean trouble for her in certain situations. Both Advantages and Disadvantages make the character more rounded and more believable.

Special Abilities are those talents or gifts that exceed the usual natural capabilities of a Human character. The character's species, some sort of unique training, or a magical/super-science/cybernetic/other effect might explain their origin. They give the character a bonus to her attributes or skills, or they provide her with access to something that the average Human character can't do.

Example: You decide to give your character a Special Ability that provides him with a +1 to one of three combat-related skill totals. If you don't have any points to spend on Special Abilities, your character needs to have some

kind of Disadvantage as well. The character might have to add 1 to the Difficulty of all interaction-related skill totals, or you might include a totally unrelated Disadvantage (of comparative power) - like the character is afraid of the dark and has trouble acting when in the dark.

Game Mechanics

Within the descriptions of several Advantages, Disadvantages, and Special Abilities, you'll notice references to game mechanics that haven't been explained yet (like the Critical Failure die result and the names of difficulty levels). If this is your first time playing an *OpenD6 game*, you can ignore these for now. You'll learn more about them in the next chapter. Once you start playing adventures, you'll find the game mechanics in this chapter useful.

Using Character Options

Every character option has its own rules for implementation. There are, if you look hard enough, some nightmarish combinations. If something seems like it could cause trouble in the game later on, check with your Galaxy Master before choosing it. Ultimately, the game-master has final say on the choice of all Advantages, Disadvantages, and Special Abilities, as well as final say on the interpretation of those choices. Players who misuse their character options, particularly their Disadvantages, may find their Advantages or Special Abilities meeting with some unfortunate accident.

Organization

Advantages, Disadvantages, and Special Abilities are listed alphabetically in their respective sections. Advantages and Disadvantages are further organized into ranks. These ranks are numbered; higher-numbered ranks are more powerful. They are abbreviated R1, R2, R3, R4, and so on. Special Abilities don't have listed ranks. Instead, the descriptions give the initial cost for gaining one rank in that ability.

Note: Galaxy Masters may allow higher ranks of character options than the examples given here. Players and Galaxy Masters should discuss the best way to represent their characters' unique set of traits.

Costs at Character Creation

Each rank in an Advantage or Disadvantage is worth one creation point (or one skill die, if you're using defined limits) per number. Advantages cost creation points, while Disadvantages give you creation points (or skill dice). Thus, a Rank 1 Advantage costs one point or die, while a Rank 4 Disadvantage gives you four points or dice.

The cost of one rank of the Special Ability is included in parentheses. Some Special Abilities, such as Longevity, do not lend themselves to being taken more than once. Players may also add Limitations to their Special Abilities, which reduce their effectiveness (and the cost) or Enhancements, which increase their effectiveness (and the cost); these are described at the end of this section.

In settings where characters with Special Abilities are common, additional ranks of each Special Ability cost one point (or skill die) per rank at character creation. In settings where characters with Special Abilities are uncommon, additional ranks of each Special Ability cost the value listed with the Special

Ability.

When using templates or defined limits for attributes and skill dice, players may use skill dice or dice received from Disadvantages to get Advantages and Special Abilities. Players in games using character creation point pools may use some of the points in their pool or points gained from Disadvantages to purchase Advantages and Special Abilities.

A maximum of 10 creation points' (or 10 extra skill dice) worth of Disadvantages is recommended for any genre.

Using the Creation Points

You may use creation points that you earn from giving your character Disadvantages to buy Advantages (at their rank cost), more skill dice (at a rate of one creation point for each skill die), or more attribute dice (at a rate of four creation points for each attribute die).

Contacts, Patrons, Enemies

Having friends in high places often means the character attracts the attention of the friends' friends... and enemies.

Players willing to roleplay long, associative networks may add lower-level Contacts in exchange for an equivalent number

of Ranks in one or more Enemies. The player must purchase one Contact or Patron of Rank 2 or greater. All additional Contacts and Enemies must be associated with that primary Contact or Patron.

As long as the total number of Ranks in the additional Contacts equals the total number of Ranks in the Enemies, the Enemies do not count toward the Disadvantage maximum.

Example: A player decides to have a Rank 3 Patron. The player may then add any number of Rank 1 or 2 Contacts as long as she adds an equal number of Enemies. If she chose to add three Rank 1 Contacts (well-placed personal assistants to the Patron), the player would have to think of three Rank 1 Enemies, or one Rank 1 and one Rank 2 Enemy, or one Rank 3 Enemy that this Patron has.

List of Character Options

Disadvantages

Achilles' Heel (R3, R4); examples (R3): Allergy, Cultural Allergy, Environmental Incompatibility, Metabolic Difference, Nutritional Requirements, Rot, Vulnerability; examples (R4): Allergy, Cultural Allergy, Rot, Symbiosis
 Advantage Flaw (R1, R2, R3); examples (R3): Infection, Minor Stigma, Stench
 Age (R1, R2)
 Bad Luck (R2, R3, R4)
 Burn-out (R1 or more)

Cultural Unfamiliarity (R1, R2, R3)
 Debt (R1, R2, R3)
 Devotion (R1, R2, R3)
 Employed (R1, R2, R3)
 Enemy (R1, R2, R3)
 Hindrance (R1 or more); examples: Bad Knee, Rude, Trick Shoulder, Uncoordinated, Unobservant
 Infamy (R1, R2, R3)
 Language Problems (R2)
 Learning Problems (R1 or more)
 Poverty (R1)
 Prejudice (R1, R2)
 Price (R1, R2)

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Quirk (R1, R2, R3); examples (R1): Dependency, Kleptomania, Indecision, Stutter; examples (R2): Dependency, Secret; examples (R3): Dependency, Paranoid, Phobic, Vengeful
Reduced Attribute (R2 or more)

Note: At character creation, Disadvantages give one creation point or one skill die per rank.

Advantages

Authority (R1, R2, R3)
Contacts (R1, R2, R3, R4)
Equipment (R1, R2, R3, R4)
Fame (R1, R2, R3)
Patron (R1, R2, R3)
Size (R1 or more)
Trademark Specialization (R1)
Wealth (R1 or more)

Note: At character creation, Advantages cost one creation point or one skill die per rank.

Special Abilities

Accelerated Healing (3)
Ambidextrous (2)
Animal Control (3)
Armor-Defeating Attack (2)
Atmospheric Tolerance (2)
Attack Resistance (2)
Attribute Scramble (4)
Blur (3)
Combat Sense (3)
Confusion (4)
Darkness (3)
Elasticity (1)
Endurance (1)
Enhanced Sense (3)
Environmental Resistance (1)
Extra Body Part (0)
Extra Sense (1)
Fast Reactions (3)
Fear (2)
Flight (6)
Glider Wings (3)
Hardiness (1)
Hypermovement (1)

Immortality (7)
Immunity (1)
Increased Attribute (2)
Infravision/Ultravision (1)
Intangibility (5)
Invisibility (3)
Iron Will (2)
Life Drain (5)
Longevity (3)
Luck, Good (2), Great (3)
Master of Disguise (3)
Multiple Abilities (1)
Natural Armor (3)
Natural Hand-to-Hand Weapon (2)
Natural Ranged Weapon (3)
Omnivorous (2)
Paralyzing Touch (4)
Possession, Limited (8), Full (10)
Quick Study (3)
Sense of Direction (2)
Shapeshifting (3)
Silence (3)
Skill Bonus (1)
Skill Minimum (4)
Teleportation (3)
Transmutation (5)
Uncanny Aptitude (3)
Ventriloquism (3)
Water Breathing (2)
Youthful Appearance (1)
Enhancements
Additional Effect (1)
Bestow (varies)
Extended Range (3)
Multiple Targets (2)
Limitations
Ability Loss (3; 1 per additional rank)
Allergy (3; 1 per additional rank)
Burn-out (1)
Cybernetics (0)
Debt (3)
Flaw (1)
Minor Stigma (3)
Others Only (2; 1 per additional rank)
Price (1)
Restricted (1)

Side Effect (2)
Singularity (varies)

Super-science (2)

Note: At character creation, the first rank in a Special Ability costs the number in parentheses in creation points or skill dice.

Additional ranks cost one creation point or skill die in games where Special Abilities are common or the number in parentheses in games where Special Abilities are uncommon.

Enhancements add to the total cost of the Special Ability. Limitations subtract from the total of the base cost of the Special Ability plus the cost of its ranks plus the cost of its Enhancements. The minimum cost for a Special Ability plus Enhancements and Limitations is 1.

DISADVANTAGES

Many Disadvantages exist as counterparts to the Advantages or Special Abilities listed herein. A Skill Bonus Special Ability is the positive side of a Hindrance Disadvantage. Some have roleplaying effects, while others alter attributes and skills.

When choosing Disadvantages, keep a few things in mind:

1. You're going to have to live with the Disadvantage. Take only Disadvantages that you don't expect to ever get rid of- there are rules for eliminating Disadvantages, but the Galaxy Master may allow their use only after lots of adventuring.
2. Choose more roleplaying Disadvantages than game mechanic ones. Instead of sticking to easy-to-use modifiers to skill attempts or abilities, select a few Disadvantages that you can roleplay. Disadvantages that can be roleplayed and can work themselves into an adventure story are much more interesting than simple modifiers to Difficulty numbers.
3. The Disadvantage has to be a disadvantage. Any Disadvantage that can be easily worked around, no matter how potent, or that actually helps the character on a regular basis is not a Disadvantage. For example, if a character has an Advantage Flaw where he can't use his Advantage when the temperature is above 100, and the character is always adventuring in places where the temperature is generally lower, then it is not a Disadvantage. Check all Disadvantages (and other character options, for that matter) with your Galaxy Master and explain to him what you think they mean before you start playing the game. That way, you can avoid this problem before it crops up. Galaxy Masters who figure out the player was purposely trying to break the system may take away the Disadvantage and an equal amount of Advantages, Special Abilities, and maybe even Character and Fate Points.

Achilles' Heel (R3)

The character has a particular serious weakness. It is not something that most other characters find especially dangerous or inconvenient, but the character suffers severe modifiers to difficulties or even damage when exposed to it. Some examples include:

Allergy: A reasonably common things that she cannot always avoid strongly affects the character.

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When exposed to the allergen, the character must generate a Moderate *Strength* or *stamina* total (as an action) or she takes 3D in damage. The character can resist the damage through applicable defenses, but she has to generate the stamina total as an action every round she is exposed to the allergen.

Cultural Allergy: The same as above, but there is some social situation that causes the character to freeze (exposure to nudity, the sight of police, etc.) and lose all Critical Success re-rolls until the condition is gone.

Environmental Incompatibility: The character is sensitive to something in the environment: an extreme of temperature, the chemical content of rain water, a component of the atmosphere, or something similar. Exposure to this without the proper protection causes the character to take a -4 modifier to his damage resistance total or a +1 modifier to all difficulties (which increases by +1 per minute exposed) until the character is out of the harmful situation.

Example: The high quantity of carbon monoxide produced by some combustion engines may poison a plant creature. When in the presence of these engines (for instance, when in a big city where these sorts of engines are used), the character must have an air filter on at all times.

Metabolic Difference: The character needs more life support (typically food) than "normal" and begins to take damage after hours of malnutrition. For food, the character eats the equivalent of twice as many meals per day as the average Human. For instance, the character must eat a meal every four hours or, every hour after the four are up, the character lose six Body Points or one Wound level, which cannot be recovered except by eating. As another example, three times per day, a different character may need to eat twice as much as a normal Human.

Nutritional Requirements: The character must ingest an element not commonly consumed by Humans (blood, dead Human flesh, etc.) to survive. Often, the character encounters prejudice because of this, and she certainly develops physical problems if she fails to consume this substance in a reasonable amount of time.

Rot: The character's body is rotting. She periodically loses pieces of herself (such as fingers and toes) and must pause to fuse them back on (this is a simple action but takes a round to perform). The character suffers no damage from this, but it should inconvenience her. For instance, in combat, the character's fingers might fall off, causing her to drop her weapon - this makes an excellent Critical Failure complication.

Vulnerability: A particular form of attack or interaction affects the character much more severely than other characters. For example, a character with a vulnerability to firearms might "freeze up" when he sees another character point a gun at him - making the other character +5 to hit him (most likely during the first round of combat only). Another character might automatically apply +10 to the Difficulty of any attempts to resist another character's Con attempts. (The less likely the situation is to occur, the greater the Difficulty modifier.)

Restrictions/Notes: The Achilles' Heel should be very serious, but not "instant death" for the character. There should always exist some way to avoid it (not easily), or some chance that the character can counter it. The more likely it affects the character, the less it actually should do. It's equally possible that the Achilles' Heel imposes different modifiers under different circumstances.

Example: A character who has allergy to small airborne particles might and suffer +3 to the Difficulty of all actions when in a dusty room or riding in a vehicle on a dirt track but +5 when in a desert. Or, the character might suffer 3D

in damage every time he's in a dusty place.

Achilles' Heel (R4)

The character's weakness is even more severe than the Rank 3 version of this Disadvantage. Some examples include:

Allergy: The same rules apply as for Allergy, save that the character cannot perform any actions except running away while exposed to the allergen.

Cultural Allergy: The same rules apply as for *Cultural Allergy (R3)*, save that not only does the character lose all Critical Success re-rolls if exposed to the specified social situations, she also is at +1 to all difficulties.

Environmental Incompatibility: The modifier to the damage resistance total goes up, or the condition is more likely to occur, or the modifier increases each round.

Rot: The character loses major parts of his body periodically due to rotting (such as limbs) and must pause to replace them. Doing so requires no skill total but does take three rounds to perform. The trigger that causes this to take effect should occur no less frequently than a Critical Failure during combat and interaction rounds.

Symbiosis: The character is bound symbiotically to another, drawing strength or energy from her. Symbiosis can be either physical or mental. For every 100 meters by which one character is separated from the other, the character loses one pip (cumulative) to either their physical attributes (*Agility*, *Mechanical*, and *Strength*) or their mental attributes (*Knowledge*, *Perception*, or *Technical*). (Remember: three pips equal one die.) If the character's symbiote is killed, the character loses 1D from the attributes affected until she can convince another character to willingly bond with her (the bonding process should be simple- like sharing blood- but willing participants must want it to happen). For an extra rank in this Disadvantage, the character is bound both mentally and physically to another, and loses from both sets of attributes if separated. For the separation to equally affect the "host," he must also have this version of the Achilles' Heel Disadvantage.

Restrictions/Notes: Additional ranks of the Achilles' Heel Disadvantage indicate even more deadly situations. See Achilles' Heel (R3) for other notes.

Advantage Flaw (R1)

This Disadvantage is linked to a particular Advantage or set of skills. Whenever the character uses it, there is some a chance for a negative modifier or roleplaying disadvantage. Here are some examples for certain Advantages:

Contacts: The Contact helps the character, but he is either "annoying" about it or a "hard bargainer." Where a normal Contact would assist the character for an almost negligible fee, the Flawed Contact will haggle and nag until "rewarded." Some reason should exist why the character would want to keep the contact happy.

Cultures: When the character gets hints or knowledge about a culture, he knows everything except some sort of critical piece of information. Or, if the character has the "sweeping knowledge" of lots of cultures, his interpretations sometimes are almost totally wrong (Galaxy Master option). In order to

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make this Flaw work, the character should not find out about the error until it would be "interesting."

Equipment: In most cases, some sort of minor mechanical imperfection exists in the equipment that no normal means can fix. For equipment that requires a skill total, Galaxy Masters could either add 3 to the Difficulty of all actions using it, or, on a Critical Failure, the equipment won't work or malfunctions. For equipment that wouldn't normally require a skill total, occasional side effects could happen or maybe it requires a periodic Moderate skill check of some kind to keep operating.

Skills: If the character fails at the skill check with one of a set of three related skills, she can't re-roll Critical Successes either until the end of the scene or until she succeeds at the skill check.

Wealth or Funds: The character cannot access his wealth easily. Either it is tied up in red tape most of the time (especially if the character has most of the money invested), or he has to go somewhere to get it (such as having a fortune back on a distant planet), or someone else (reasonably friendly) has control over it and doesn't always release it easily.

Restrictions/Notes: In general, at Rank 1, a flaw should not debilitate a character or take away his Advantage on a regular basis- but it should make it a little less of a sure thing.

Advantage Flaw (R2)

This Disadvantage works in exactly the same manner as *Advantage Flaw (R1)*, above, but with more serious results. If the Flaw came into play occasionally (like every time the character visited a desert), it now comes into play much more frequently (like when he is in any dry environment). If the Flaw made things a little more difficult, then the Flaw makes things a lot more difficult (the Difficulty modifier doubles from the Rank 1 version).

Restrictions/Notes: Having circumstances that effectively take away the complete benefit of the Advantage is certainly within the bounds of *Advantage Flaw (R2)*, and those circumstances can occur reasonably often (no more than during one quarter of a normal adventure, however). They will force the player to roleplay and to think about ways to get around the Flaw or to try other options, rather than just relying on a particular Advantage, Special Ability, or skill set.

Example: If a character has a set of skills with the Flaw that they only work at night- a Rank 2 Flaw if only about a quarter of the character's normal adventuring occurs during the daytime- that would force the character to rely on other abilities and his wits during the daytime.

The rules for *Advantage Flaw (R2)* are otherwise the same as Rank 1.

Advantage Flaw (R3)

This rank takes on some of the characteristics of an *Achilles' Heel (R3)*, but more in direct relationship to an Advantage, an attribute, or a large set of skills. The rules for the Flaw are the same as for *Advantage Flaw (R2)*, but the effects are even more severe. Not only does the character lose the benefits of the Advantage or attribute (or undergoes a condition that essentially negates it), but he also suffers an additional Disadvantage.

Example: Your character has this Disadvantage attached to her Metaphysics attribute. Every time she uses her special mental abilities, she taps into the general mood of the people around her. If the people near the metaphysicist experience strong or negative emotions, the character gets a nasty headache, causing her to

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immediately lose the ability to use her mental powers and her player to be unable to re-roll any Critical Successes until the end of the scene.

Example: A character has *Equipment (R3)* – a really powerful weapon. But, whenever the character suffers a Critical Failure using the weapon, it not only runs out of ammo, but the character experiences some sort of feedback at a moderate damage total (maybe the weapon's normal damage minus a specific amount). The character then has to recharge the weapon (either through the use of a *Price Disadvantage* or by waiting until a major break in the adventure's action, most likely).

Some other examples:

Infection: Under certain circumstances, the character passes along select abilities and characteristics to another character. The character has an infection score of *Strength +2D*. (This is not a skill and players may not raise it except by taking additional ranks in this version of the Disadvantage.)

The Galaxy Master and the player should determine how the character spreads the infection. It could happen as the side effect of an attack, through physical contact, or through some other means. When the character performs the requisite action, he generates an infection total (which does not count as a separate action). The target generates a *Strength* or *stamina* total as well (which does not count as an action). If the character's infection total exceeds (not equal to) the target's *Strength* or *stamina* total, the target is infected.

An infection passes certain Special Abilities and Disadvantages to the target (specified by the player and the Galaxy Master when the player gives the character this Disadvantage). It is possible for the infection to pass more ranks in Disadvantages on than Special Abilities, but is not possible for it to pass more ranks in Special Abilities than Disadvantages.

Keep in mind that the infected character may well hate the character responsible for his new state, so the infecting character may have gained an Enemy. In fact, there should exist some overwhelming reasons why this is actually bad for the infecting character – it is a Disadvantage, after all.

Galaxy Masters who do not feel that the *Enemy Disadvantage* is enough of a negative could also work in other sorts of Advantage Flaws as side effects of spreading the infection.

For an extra rank in the *Advantage Flaw: Infection* Disadvantage, the infection die code increases to *Strength+4D*. Also, the penalties for infecting another character should be more severe – maybe the character infected then knows things about the infecting character that will give him an advantage over his enemy, or perhaps the infecting character temporarily loses abilities or attribute pips.

Minor Stigma: There is something that the character cannot do without performing the "proper rituals" before or after (a fighter whose cult must "purify" him after killing someone; a mentalist who cannot use Metaphysics without special equipment).

Stench: The character smells terrible due to one of his Advantages or just because he exists. Add 6 to the Difficulty of all sneak attempts, as everyone can smell him coming. This also affects interaction attempts, giving them at least a +1 to the Difficulty.

Restrictions/Notes: *Advantage Flaw (R3)* takes a powerful Advantage and turns it into a worse-than-useless Disadvantage for a comparatively brief period of time. A single Advantage can have more than one Advantage Flaw, and, if the character wants, several Flaws of various ranks can link to one Advantage. See other ranks of Advantage Flaw for more information and examples.

Age (R1)

The character is a teenager or just past middle age. And, since this is a roleplaying game and not real life, he'll stay that way. In general, characters who are "too young" often have to roleplay through episodes where they are not taken seriously, where they are ignored, and where they have less rights and control than older characters. Those who are "too old" get treated in much the same way- characters in their prime often defer to the character, but they also treat the character as if he were infirm or possibly senile.

Restrictions/Notes: In general, the Galaxy Master should try to treat the character as if he were "too old" or "too young" and have fun with it. Game mechanics are seldom required, as good roleplaying can make things work here, but if they become necessary, add 3 to the Difficulty of intimidation and persuasion actions performed by the character that his age would bother (a young character trying to lead a group of experienced characters, or an older character trying to convince younger characters that he is "with it"). A character may only have one version of Age.

Age (R2)

The Disadvantage is the same, only more so. Instead of being a teenager, the character is a preteen child. Instead of being just past middle age, the character is old. The roleplaying situations are basically the same, but the effects are more dramatic.

Restrictions/Notes: An old character receives +1 to the Difficulty of physical actions - those that rely on *Agility*, *Mechanical*, and *Strength* - that require unusual exertion (running, jumping, fighting, etc.). A young character adds 1 to the Difficulty of all mental actions- those that use *Knowledge*, *Perception*, or *Technical*- when attempting to solve "adult" problems or interact with adults. Players should roleplay both versions true to type. Two Disadvantages suitable for association with this one include *Reduced Attribute* (especially for *Age: Old*) and *Hindrance*.

Characters may be "young" or "old" and not take this Disadvantage. Older characters in good shape have no problems jogging, lifting, fighting, or whatever, and young, intelligent people can often interact and think just as well- if not better- than adults. This Disadvantage addresses those characters, young and old, who can't keep up as easily.

Bad Luck (R2)

The character is exceptionally unlucky. This Disadvantage is under the Galaxy Master's control most of the time. The easiest way to handle it is, whenever the player rolls a Critical Failure but something bad happens (in addition to taking away the highest die in the roll). The Galaxy Master can choose from not allowing the player to re-roll Critical Successes until the end of the scene, the character losing an action during the next round, or invoking some sort of strange but not too terrible "bad luck effect."

Example: A character with *Bad Luck* is running from a group of mercenaries that he's been fighting for some time. He tries to jump across a reactor shaft when the player rolls a Critical Failure on the dice. Well, the character probably failed in the climb/jump attempt (so he falls), but, instead of being able to grab for a cable or a lower ledge, the character's belt gets caught on a hook. Now, the character has to free himself before the mercs come around the corner and blow him away.

Restrictions/Notes: A character may take *Bad Luck (R2)* if he already has the *Good Luck* or *Great Luck* Special Ability. The character might even, on occasion, use the benefits of the *Good Luck* or *Great Luck* Special Ability to get out of trouble or partially negate the effects of *Bad Luck (R2)* – that's the way it works. Also, the Galaxy Master should remember that the character has *Bad Luck (R2)* – not the player. If the player gets into a consistent "streak" of rolling Critical Failures on the dice, then the Galaxy Master should start "skipping" the invocation of *Bad Luck (R2)* occasionally– more than three or four occurrences of *Bad Luck (R2)* during an adventure is a little much.

Bad Luck (R3)

The rules for this Disadvantage are the same as for *Bad Luck (R2)*. However, a Critical Failure or a total equal to one more than the die code of the skill or attribute causes *Bad Luck (R2)* to activate. (For example, if the character has 5D in a skill and rolls a total of 6 on the dice – which is one more than the die code in the skill—the Disadvantage comes into play.) The effects are exactly the same, only the Galaxy Master might make the setbacks more uncomfortable.

Restrictions/Notes: See *Bad Luck (R2)*.

Bad Luck (R4)

The same as *Bad Luck (R2)* and *Bad Luck (R3)*, but the character suffers the effects on a Critical Failure or a total equal to or less than two more than the die code of the skill or attribute. (So, if the character with a skill of 5D rolls a 6 or 7, then the Disadvantage is activated.) The minimum effect is that the character loses her actions on the round and probably something disastrous happens.

Restrictions/Notes: See *Bad Luck (R2)* and *Bad Luck (R3)*. Since *Bad Luck (R4)* can have such devastating effects, the Galaxy Master might want to overrule occurrences of it. For example, if, during a standard scene of an adventure, a character is trying to persuade a shopkeeper to sell him an item at a better price, he might roll a low total on the dice. The Galaxy Master could have something disastrous happen– the shopkeeper keels over with a heart attack just as the chief of police walks in and the character is suddenly suspected of murder– but does it serve any purpose in the adventure? Possibly, but if it doesn't, save it until later. Then, when the character is at the climax of the adventure and he doesn't roll a disastrously low total – but the Galaxy Master feels a "dose of bad luck" would improve the story– he can use that as an excuse. Players should understand that *Bad Luck* is arbitrary and will often occur at the worst possible moment.

Burn-out (R1 or more)

Under a certain set of proscribed circumstances, the Advantage goes away– permanently. The player and the Galaxy Master should work out the circumstances, with the following criteria:

1. The Burn-out should have a chance of occurring about once or twice an adventure.
2. The Burn-out should be something the character can avoid – but she might not want to avoid it.
3. A logical reason for the Burn-out to occur should exist.
4. Both the player and the Galaxy Master operate under the knowledge that the Burnout will occur at some point.

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Some examples of when a Burn-out could occur include:

- An opponent soundly defeats the character in an adventure or subjects him to a particular uncommon attack (and thus, for example, he loses the respect of his *Contact* or foster *Culture*).
- The character completes a particular mission of great importance (this would probably only happen after several adventures, but it is something the character wants to complete for some reason).
- A character's Advantage is somehow negated (a *Contact* who has a good chance of being killed, a piece of Equipment that someone is trying to steal or destroy, etc.).

This Disadvantage is worth a number of ranks equal to one-half (rounded up) of the Advantage with which it's associated.

Restrictions/Notes: Any Advantage could have the possibility of Burn-out. Just think of a logical (or, perhaps, supernatural reason an Advantage would go away. There should exist a decent chance that it could go away, but the character should have some chance of avoiding that occurrence ... for a while.

Cultural Unfamiliarity (R1)

The character is an outsider to the "mainstream" culture of the society he spends the most time in. The player should decide on the character's native planet, which is somewhere with a different culture than the one he is normally in. Alternatively, he could be an android who hasn't been programmed with all of the correct social skills. Bigots might get in the way of the character, and the character might not always "know" things about the setting that natives would automatically understand.

Example: A character might be from a recognized and generally well-liked alien species but work on Human planets. Nonetheless, the character is from an alien culture and so might see some things differently.

Restrictions/Notes: At the worst, Galaxy Masters can treat the Disadvantage like *Prejudice (R1)*, but, most often, the character is just unfamiliar with aspects of the mainstream. Characters cannot usually take this Disadvantage more than once.

Galaxy Masters may choose to disallow this Disadvantage if their campaigns have no single "mainstream" culture.

Cultural Unfamiliarity (R2)

The character is of a culture almost totally different from the "mainstream" he operates in. The character should constantly make mistakes and social gaffes. All attempts at streetwise or similar "getting around town" skills should have +6 to the Difficulty (at least). In addition, the character should probably have trouble with the native language (he could even take the Disadvantage *Language Problems*).

Restrictions/Notes: The rules are the same as for *Cultural Unfamiliarity (R1)*.

Cultural Unfamiliarity (R3)

The character is, in all respects, an alien. Whether he's from another planet with a completely different culture or from some exotic and near-unimaginable locale, he just doesn't fit in (socially, and, most likely, physically). Otherwise, this Disadvantage works exactly the same way as the other rank versions.

Restrictions/Notes: See *Cultural Unfamiliarity (R1)*.

Debt (R1)

The character owes money, or something else valuable, to someone. In most cases, some sort of lending institution or credit house exists, and the payments aren't too arduous. The character just has a harder time getting credit and has to turn over a substantial amount of any profits he makes on an adventure to the lender.

Restrictions/Notes: Players should take this Disadvantage if they intend for their characters to live up to it. The character should have a reason he doesn't want to default on the debt, which the player works out beforehand. Also, *Debt* (any rank) with *Enemy* (any rank) can be an interesting combination—maybe the character is in deep to a loan shark or a manipulative and unscrupulous lender.

A character may have this Disadvantage with the Advantage *Wealth* (any rank), as long as there is some reason it can't be just paid off. A character with *Wealth (R3)* (phenomenal resources) might be stuck in a contract where he has to turn over the profits of any adventure to someone, for example—he still has his wealth, but he has to cough up all the little neat things and rewards he gets at the end of the adventure (or the character has to persuade the lender/contract holder to let him keep them).

Debt (R2)

The character owes a lot of money (or something else valuable) to someone dangerous, or the results of owing this debt are dangerous. For example, the character could owe his life to a really strange old scientist, and, every time that person needs a favor (usually going off somewhere dangerous and doing something suicidal), the character has to drop everything and go.

Restrictions/Notes: The rules are the same as for *Debt (R1)*.

Debt (R3)

The character owes almost everything to someone or something. In the case of worldly goods, the character must turn over nearly everything to the "lender" at the end of an adventure—the character must "borrow" these things back at the beginning of the next adventure. And it is up to the Galaxy Master what the "lender" gives back.

In most cases, this means the character is either Employed or under some similar sort of restriction.

Example: Your character might belong to a particularly strict cult or religion. She has to tithe all worldly goods (or, at least, a large portion of worldly goods) to the cult after every adventure. If she does not, she would be cast out—a fate she would not enjoy—or even hunted and killed. At the beginning of each adventure, the character must beg and persuade whoever is in charge to let her have any goods she needs.

Restrictions/Notes: *Debt (R3)* is so wide-sweeping that players may not usually combine in it with the lower versions or link to individual Advantages unless the player and the Galaxy Master are particularly inventive. A character with *Debt (R3)* might "owe" the possession of a Rank 3 or Rank 4 Advantage to a particular source (a character might have received *Equipment* from a multiple-system-spanning megacorporation source) and have to pay some sort of tithe (a sacrifice, all the money the character obtains, etc.) to get the use of the Advantage.

Devotion (R1)

The character feels compelled to take certain actions out of love, an honor code, or a perceived duty to something else. The character may, at times, do things he finds morally questionable in order to achieve a greater good. With *Devotion (R1)*, the character's beliefs do not come into play very often.

Devotion (R2)

The character with the *Devotion (R2)* Disadvantage believes very strongly in something and will attempt to persuade others of the truth of his beliefs. His patriotism or loyalty to an ideal plays a role in his day-to-day life.

Devotion (R3)

At this rank, the character's belief in the cause motivates almost all his actions. The character would willingly die for his belief.

Employed (R1)

The character has a job. Maybe the job relates to what the character wants to do during adventures, or maybe not. Regardless, the character wants to keep her job (or has to, for some reason), and she must take responsibility for missing work and fulfilling her obligations.

Restrictions/Notes: The player and the Galaxy Master might have to work to roleplay this, but an occasional conflict should arise between what the character wants to do and what she has to do. The character might even have to keep some activities secret or lose her job.

Some examples include special ops for a government or private organization, bodyguard, mercenary, reporter, writer, holo-vid maker, private investigator, bounty hunter, and police Officer. The less freedom the character has in making decisions during the adventure and what she wants to do during her working hours (and perhaps even her spare time), the greater the rank in Employed.

Employed (R2)

The character works for someone, or something, that pretty much runs his life. When he goes on adventures, he either has to go through lots of red tape to get permission, or it's because he was assigned the mission. As a result, the character has little free will regarding what he does or how he does it, and he should come into conflict with his employer on occasion. Also, since the character is an employee, if he is on a mission, he usually has to turn over his share of the loot for corporate disposal- he'll get something out of it, certainly, but not a full share.

Restrictions/Notes: The rules are the same as for Employed (R1). Just make sure that "the job" is fairly inconvenient for the character, but there are reasons he doesn't quit. Maybe he has the *Wealth* Advantage only so long as he has the *Employed (R2)* Disadvantage- that would be a good way of tying in the Disadvantage.

Employed (R3)

The character is, essentially, a slave. This does not mean the character is poor or without means- just

without free choice. The character does virtually everything because he must. For example, a character might be the head of a large corporation. But the only way things get done is for the character to do them or be there to oversee their getting done. Adventures only occur when they are in direct concordance with the interests of the "employer." In all other ways, this Disadvantage is like its lower rank versions.

Restrictions/Notes: See Employed under the other ranks.

Enemy (R1)

An individual or group has it in for the character. An Enemy who is a single person of power and influence no greater than the character might actually want the character dead. An *Enemy (R1)* of power and influence greater than the character simply wants to hassle the character for some reason. Maybe in the town the character operates, the law enforcement authorities have his name and picture on file- and they'll use any excuse to run him in or hassle him because they think of him as a troublemaker. Or, perhaps, the character's landlord throws everything out on the street if he's one minute late with the rent, or the character's boss always assigns him the most boring or most dangerous missions. The Enemy does not have to have a position in the character's life- he can just be someone who, for some reason known to the Galaxy Master (and probably the player, but not always the character), has a grudge against the character.

Restrictions/Notes: There is no reason a player can't use this Disadvantage similarly to an *Advantage Flaw* or as a complement to other Disadvantages or even Advantages. Maybe a character's *Contact* is sweet and helpful (a secretary in the Pentagon who tells the character a little more about the mission he's been assigned), but someone who influences the *Contact* is an *Enemy* (the secretary's boss who has been trying to seduce the secretary and resents the fact that the secretary likes the character better) and sometimes makes it hard for the contact to help.

Enemy (R1) characters should either show up only occasionally (maybe once during an adventure), or they should be minor annoyances that can only be a real problem if the character doesn't deal with them when they show up. Multiple Enemies of various ranks can be selected (just don't go overboard).

Enemy (R2)

The rules are the same as for *Enemy (R1)*, only the character is more powerful, more annoying, and/ or more a part of the character's life.

Restrictions/Notes: It should be mentioned that killing the Enemy or running away should not get rid of the Disadvantage- at least not easily. At the very least, the character should have to go through a few adventures to "remove" the Enemy from his life. Usually, the character has to deal with the Enemy for quite a long time. Multiple Enemies can, of course, be selected.

Enemy (R3)

Again, the rules are the same as for *Enemy (R1)* and *Enemy (R2)*. Most likely, a group of people or a very powerful person hounds the character, wishing to kill or otherwise remove the character from the game setting. They often hurt people she knows and do vile deeds just because the character won't like them. The *Enemy (R3)* should get involved in, directly or indirectly, most adventures the character goes on. Just about everything bad that happens to the character would please the Enemy- and he

is probably responsible for a lot of them.

Restrictions/Notes: *Enemy (R3)* is a very powerful, and very important, Disadvantage. Many beginning Galaxy Masters might not want to go to the trouble of creating and constantly maintaining a villain or group of villains relating to the character- but others will enjoy it. Talk to your Galaxy Master about this option before you select it.

Hindrance (R1 or more)

The character has a minor physical or mental handicap that makes certain actions more difficult. The *Hindrance* could be a permanent physical injury, a particular mental block regarding certain types of activities, a limitation innate to the character's species, or the result of age.

The player and the Galaxy Master should work out some sort of affliction and then choose a group of related skills that get Difficulty modifiers totaling +3. Some examples of sets of three skills getting a +1 modifier to the Difficulty of each include:

Bad Knee: *Acrobatics; Climb/Jump; Running*

Rude: *Bargain; Con; Persuasion*

Trick Shoulder: *Climb/Jump; Melee Combat; Throwing*

Uncoordinated: *Acrobatics; Melee Combat; Sleight of Hand*

Unobservant: *Investigation; Languages; Search*

The players may use this Disadvantage to restrict one form of their characters' movement. A two-meter reduction in one form of movement (running, swimming, jumping, or climbing) is equivalent to a +1 Difficulty modifier, so a player could take a small movement restriction along with Difficulty modifiers to skills. The minimum movement rate for a character is one meter.

Characters with a native environment requiring an alternative means of movement other than walking (such as swimming or burrowing) may take one rank of *Hindrance: Atypical Move* to represent the inability to walk or jump. Instead, the character uses his base Move to represent his base swimming or burrowing Move. Thus, a water-dwelling character without legs and with this type of *Hindrance* would have a swimming Move of 10 (instead of 5), could not walk, and would be limited in the kind of jumping he could perform.

Players who wish to reduce their characters' damage resistance total (to represent delicate physical natures) may take a -1 modifier to that total for each rank in this Disadvantage.

Restrictions/Notes: Players may use specializations -with game-master approval. Three specializations that the Galaxy Master thinks the player might have to use reasonably often (like investigation: find clues or firearms: energy weapons) could substitute for one general skill. *Hindrance (R1)* can be selected several times, as long as the Galaxy Master thinks it appropriate. Since it is very much the counterpart to the *Skill Bonus* Special Ability, additional restrictions and notes can be related to the ones found there.

Each additional rank in *Hindrance* increases the total Difficulty modifier by +3, which may affect the few skills in a Rank 1 group or can increase the number of skills covered by the *Hindrance*.

Infamy (R1)

The character is about as well known as a character with Fame (R1), but for different reasons. The odds of being recognized are the same as for *Fame (R1)*, but the reaction is quite different. The character experiences hostility, prejudice, and intentional slights- in game mechanic terms, the character should have the Difficulty of all interactions increased by at least +3.

Restrictions/Notes: There is a reason for this negative attention. Either the character did something, is accused of having done something, or is suspected of having done something not particularly pleasant, or the character has, through other strange circumstances, earned a "bad rep." Sometimes, this Infamy will help the character- but it shouldn't help too much. If the character has a combination of Fame and Infamy (by selecting both options), then maybe he's earned a reputation like Wyatt Earp or Dan James in the Old Terran Old West - certain people would look up to him or respect him, and there would be definite fear there most of the time, but there would also be a lot of people who would enjoy seeing the person leave or die. Of course, *Infamy (R1)* should be something minor -maybe the character is a former criminal, or he did something questionable in the past and was cleared. People are not overtly hostile, but they are unfriendly when they recognize him. Several ranks of Infamy can only be selected if the character is infamous for multiple reasons- but the effects should be cumulative, and this can only be done if the Galaxy Master thinks it is appropriate. A character with *Infamy (R3)* would hardly have to worry about *Infamy (R1)* in most cases, so it would not be a proper combination.

Infamy (R2)

The character is, most likely, wanted for a crime of a fairly serious nature, or he did something (or is thought to have done something) in the past that makes him hated and reviled by most people. The rules are essentially the same as for Infamy (R1) and the recognition chances are similar to *Fame (R2)*, but the modifier to interactions usually should be at least +6.

Restrictions/Notes: As stated under *Infamy (R1)*, unless combined with Fame, this Disadvantage only allows for the negative aspects of notoriety. A character who has *Infamy (R2)* would be considered by nearly everyone (but not everyone) to be "scum" and someone who "deserves no better than he gets." When combined with an equal or higher rank of Fame, there is often that "fear and respect" option- many characters will still try to betray or hurt the character in some way, but most won't be that open about it.

Infamy (R3)

The character has trouble going out in public because a lot of people hate her to the point of violence. Chances are good that, if she fails an interaction (with a +9 to the Difficulty), the other person will drive her away. The player could select Enemy (R1) in addition to this Disadvantage to reflect those hunting her. However, the character could use disguises and avoid populated areas. Most likely, the character has to move around until she can "live down" her infamy (if ever) or until she dies.

Restrictions/Notes: See Infamy (R1) and Infamy (R2).

Language Problems (R2)

The character does not understand the language of the area she spends most of her time in. She

must learn skill pips in the specialization languages: (local language). She also receives a +6 Difficulty modifier in addition to any other modifiers for what she's attempting to convey or understand.

Restrictions/Notes: The character cannot begin the game with more than one pip in languages: (local language), but she may improve the skill at +2 to the cost. However, the character should speak another language in the game setting fluently.

Learning Problems (R1 or more)

When the character attempts to learn a new skill, or improve an old one, he does so at +2 per rank to the Character Point cost. Alternatively, the character can only learn or improve a skill if she attempts it and fails. A character should have to fail with a single skill at least three times per adventure before being allowed to learn or improve the skill.

This Disadvantage is associated with a single attribute, and it applies to specializations. There should be some sort of reason for this in the character's background, such as a Difficulty reading or a lack of education.

Restrictions/Notes: This is the counterpart to the *Quick Study* Special Ability, and it should be treated in much the same way. This Disadvantage can be taken multiple times, either for the same attribute (with a cumulative increase in skill cost) or for different attributes.

Poverty (R1)

Since characters who adventure tend to accumulate wealth, this Disadvantage is only available at Rank 1. The character begins the game with the shirt on his back and, maybe, a few pieces of cheap and substandard equipment. The character should also have the attitude of someone who is "poor," whatever that might be in the game setting.

If using Funds as an attribute, this Disadvantage subtracts 10 from relevant totals.

Restrictions/Notes: As an excellent combination, this Disadvantage could be selected with *Debt* or *Price* to make the situation more realistic. *Poverty* can only be selected once.

Prejudice (R1)

The character is of a minority group – or maybe it is just the character himself – that is subject to prejudice and discrimination. The character receives modifiers (from +2 to +4) to difficulties during normal interaction with characters not of the minority group, and is generally treated unfairly by society. The group the character belongs to, or the reason he is discriminated against, should be identified when the character gets this Disadvantage, and the player should know how he can expect to be treated in most cases.

Restrictions/Notes: The Galaxy Master has to be careful with this one. Roleplaying prejudice is not often something players want to get into. When used in a setting where there are many different sapient species, however, it can be quite interesting – especially if there are several characters in the group who are prejudiced against.

Prejudice (R2)

The minority group the character belongs to is oppressed. The character experiences disparity virtually every day. While other characters of the same minority group may not actually experience this prejudice (that is, they didn't select this option), it is probably because they aren't in positions where this discrimination can be easily practiced.

Restrictions/Notes: The character often experiences discrimination, and most interactions are performed at a +3 to +6 to the Difficulty. This prejudice should be roleplayed at every opportunity. However, Galaxy Masters and players should only use this Disadvantage when both sides are comfortable with using it in a pretend situation (see Prejudice (R1) for more information).

Price (R1)

This is a Disadvantage similar to Advantage Flaw. But, instead of there being something wrong with the character's Advantage or a set of three related skills, there is a "price tag" attached. Every time the character wants to use the ability, he has to pay a Price at least a few times during the adventure to continue using the ability.

The Price might be an actual fee- and a significant one at that. If the fee isn't paid, the Advantage goes away until the price can be paid. But this won't work for many Advantages (at least not in an interesting manner), so there are other ways to do it.

Most likely, the Price will be a roleplaying effect. Maybe every time a Contact does a favor for a character, he not only demands the normal, negotiated recompense (if any), but the character must do a favor of equal importance for the character. Or, whenever a piece of Equipment is used, parts of it need replacing or servicing by a specialist (who may charge a high fee or ask a favor), most likely after the adventure.

One more suggestion for *Price (R1)* would be that the character has to pay one Fate Point or three Character Points at the end of an adventure where the Advantage or skills were relied upon, to "pay for" the usage. This reflects the fact that the use of the Advantage or skills take something out of the character when they are accessed.

Restrictions/Notes: The Price should be fairly easy to meet, but it should take some work. At this rank, it should be something that the character can roleplay along with an adventure or resolve between short adventures or parts of longer adventures (like paying off the recipient of the Price). However, if the character does not pay the Price, the Advantage does go away - and, if (in the Galaxy Master's opinion) the character does this too often, both the Advantage and the Price should go away permanently. Price can be taken often at various ranks, and the same Price can be linked to more than one Advantage - though, unless the Price is actually double (the character has to pay the same price twice as often), it only counts as one Disadvantage.

Price (R2)

The Price for using a particular Advantage, or group of Advantages or set of three related skills, is much higher than mentioned in Rank 1, but the rules are the same. Contacts will be extremely hard to pay off or do favors for- maybe an entire short adventure has to be devoted to paying back a contact who helped out.

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Optionally, paying two Fate Points or six Character Points at the end of an adventure where the Advantage was used is a quick way of paying the price.

Restrictions/Notes: See *Price (R)* for more information.

Quirk (R)

The character suffers from a personality quirk that makes certain types of roleplaying and interaction more difficult. This *Quirk* could simply be a habit or a mannerism that has gone too far, or it could be a minor psychological problem. Some examples include:

Dependency: The character has a slight dependency on a substance or even a roleplaying event. The character might be a pack-a-day smoker who, if he doesn't get a cigarette at least once every few hours of game time, gets irritable and loses Critical Success re-rolls during interactions. Or maybe the character always has to have the last word in any situation and will often beat an argument into the ground rather than "lose."

Kleptomania: When in a store or surrounded by small, portable items, the character will occasionally try to "lift" something. When possessed by his Quirk (see rules below), the character suffers +3 to the Difficulty of *Sleight of Hand* or related attempts at theft because he really doesn't know he's doing it.

Indecision: The character does not like making decisions and will delay making them. When roleplaying, the character should actively participate in group discussions, but he should be wishy-washy and indecisive at critical moments.

Stutter: When under pressure, relaxed, nervous (such as failing a skill roll), or some other fairly common "mood" hits the character, he stutters. The upshot is the character suffers +3 to the Difficulty of any interaction at this time, and the player should roleplay having a hard time getting his ideas across to the other players. This lasts until the player rolls a Critical Success.

Restrictions/Notes: Good roleplayers will have fun with these, and other, Quirks that they come up with. Indeed, this Disadvantage is often more fun to play than many Advantages- but the Galaxy Master should make certain it is being roleplayed. Whenever the Galaxy Master thinks it appropriate, he should make the player generate a willpower or *Knowledge* total against a base Moderate Difficulty to "indulge" in his *Quirk* automatically (that is, "suffer" for it). The negative effects of the *Quirk* immediately come into play. Also, if the character repeatedly makes this roll, resisting the impulses of the Quirk, the Galaxy Master should start modifying the Difficulty upwards until the character fails. Multiple *Quirks* can be selected.

Quirks may offer variable Difficulty modifiers depending on the circumstances. The more likely that the *Quirk* affects the character, the less it actually should do in each situation.

Example: A character who has a fear of water might "panic" and suffer +3 to the Difficulty of all actions when exposed to a large body of water, +5 when in it, and +3 when wet.

Additional Note: Some players may choose to have their characters roleplay *Quirks* they already have or might like to play. Sometimes this works; sometimes it doesn't. It can be hysterical to have a player "steal" dice out from under another player's nose (symbolizing the fact that the character is taking necessary items away from the other player's character) as long as things don't go too far- that is, when people start getting upset. However, players who are "indecisive" should not play characters who are indecisive - since they would be anyway. This is too much like getting a Disadvantage for

nothing.

Quirk (R2)

The rules for *Quirk (R2)* are the same as for *Quirk (R1)*, only the chance of occurrence is much greater and the effects are larger.

Dependency: The character needs to fulfill his dependency much more often (once a scene, perhaps). The character also experiences one automatic Critical Failure per scene that he doesn't (a smoker might have a coughing fit in the middle of a tense negotiation or during a sneak attempt, for example).

Secret: There's something about the character that she needs to hide. If it were discovered, it would put her friends, family, and even her own life at risk. This could be a civilian identity (if she has a heroic alter ego) or a skeleton in the closet.

Restrictions/Notes: The Difficulty of resisting the "impulse" is now difficult, but all other rules are the same as under *Quirk (R1)*.

Quirk (R3)

These "personality quirks" are much more serious. The character might be a junkie, a psychotic with a certain type of behavior, or has a severe phobia (he's deathly afraid of something). Some examples:

Dependency: The character is a junkie, always after a "fix." The "fix" might be an illegal substance, or a perfectly normal one, or even a type of roleplaying interaction (maybe the character has to try to come as close to dying as he can).

Paranoid: The character trusts no one. He receives a +6 to the bonus number when trying to resist con attempts, but he also receives this "bonus" when trying to be persuaded- and he must be persuaded before he'll help even his closest friends. "Everyone is out to get him."

Phobic: The character is deathly afraid of something. It could be heights, open spaces, spiders, or another person (such as an authority figure or one with whom he has frightening memories). Unless the character makes his willpower roll (below), she dissolves into terror and may take no actions other than hiding or running away until away from the object of fear.

Vengeful: The character cannot stand to "lose" or be "wronged." If the character perceives herself as looking foolish (or whatever), she will go to great lengths to get even (in reality, the character probably takes it too far).

Restrictions/Notes: The character has to make a Very difficult Knowledge or willpower roll to overcome the Quirk- at the least. If, in the Galaxy Master's judgment, there is a reason the character should have modifiers to the Difficulty, then he will. Players who don't want to play a character that can frequently lose control should avoid this option. Other rules are the same as under *Quirk (R1)*

The Galaxy Master may allow higher versions of this Disadvantage, with larger modifiers and an increase of +5 per rank to the *Willpower* Difficulty.

Reduced Attribute (R2)

Something about the character's species, age, physical condition, or some other factor has

permanently reduced one attribute by one pip per rank. The character may not reduce the attribute die code below 1D, and the attribute die code may never be increased by spending Character Points (though gaining a Special Ability would help).

Restrictions/Notes: With the exception of permanently restricting access to an Extra-normal attribute, a player may not give a character this Disadvantage at character creation.

Only one rank may be taken with an Extranormal attribute of 0D, and the character's species must be required to take at least 1D in the affected attribute. Characters who have this Disadvantage on an Extranormal attribute before having any die code in that attribute may never take that Extranormal attribute.

The reduction in die code increases by one pip for each additional rank taken in this Disadvantage. (Remember that three pips equal one die.) The character may have different variations on this Disadvantage for each attribute, including Extranormal attributes, such as *Metaphysics*.

ADVANTAGES

Authority (R1)

The character has some measure of power over other people in his region. The scope of the character's rank, duties, and power in his local jurisdiction dictate the rank in this Advantage. An *Authority (R1)* Advantage might belong to someone who, because of circumstance, does not have a lot of opportunity to use his authority or someone who is very low in rank.

Law Enforcement is one version of this Advantage that gives adventurers some measure of abilities associated with being a deputized agent of the law. *Authority: Law Enforcement (R1)* means the character has limited authority to enforce the law on a single planet. Private investigators, bounty hunters, and bail bondsmen would need this Advantage.

Restrictions/Notes: It is not necessary to have the *Authority: Law Enforcement* Advantage to own a firearm parts of space that allow ordinary citizens to own them. However, if owning a gun is illegal on a planet, solar system, or galactic empire, and thus limited to deputized officials, then this version of the Advantage would be necessary.

Remember, too, that outside of the character's jurisdiction or permit limits, this Advantage may have little or no value.

Authority (R2)

Same as *Authority (R1)*, but the character has more influence, possibly commanding a small number of troops or being in charge of a small company or town. With *Authority: Law Enforcement (R2)*, the character is actually a law enforcement Officer and is allowed to make full arrests and reasonable search and seizures (as dictated by planetary laws).

Restrictions/Notes: See *Authority (R1)* for more information.

Authority (R3)

Same as *Authority (R1)*, except that the character has a great deal of power and influence. The head of a large company or someone whose authority is simply never questioned would have this Advantage. With *Authority: Law Enforcement (R3)*, the character may enforce the law on multiple planets in a system.

Restrictions/Notes: Higher levels of Authority indicate a wider sphere of influence, such as multiple systems, a single galaxy, or time. Otherwise, see *Authority (R1)* for more information.

Contacts (R1)

The character "knows somebody" or a group of somebodies who will generally help out the character if he makes a decent appeal or sufficiently compensates the contact. This level of contact only sticks around for a limited amount of time (part of an adventure or maybe throughout a short adventure).

The character might know a "group" with a wider range of influence (but less power) that will help out, again, for a modest fee or under the right circumstances. The influence might not be as direct, but it is easier to come by. For example, there might be clubs or organizations that provide certain services for travelers- navigation coordinates to common systems, accommodation reservations, emergency transportation, and so on- for a small membership fee. You have to call them or go to their offices, and they won't do much about that maniac with the blaster who is chasing you, but they can be of immense help under the right circumstances.

Restrictions/Notes: Contacts should not automatically help the character, but they should be reasonable in their negotiations. Multiple contacts of various ranks may be selected and they may be stacked. For example, a certain person might be a *Contact (R1)* in most circumstances, but he could be a *Contact (R2)* or even a *Contact (R3)* in the right place - for example, a mercenary might help out for a fee versus normal foes, but when fighting his "hereditary enemies," he might be almost invincible and eager to help.

Remember that contacts are Galaxy Master characters. They should be created and played rationally. If a player refuses to roleplay or takes advantage of contacts, he should be penalized when trying to use them (and possibly lose them). There should also be a reason in the character's story why he has these contacts.

Contacts (R2)

This Advantage is identical to *Contacts (R1)*, except the contact is more powerful, more influential, easier to get hold of, willing to do more favors, or affects the game on a larger scale.

If the contact is supposed to be a large group, it now has much greater influence over a wider area. For instance, instead of belonging to a travel club, the character might have a government agency to help him out occasionally.

Restrictions/Notes: Under no circumstances should any contact, regardless of rank number, make roleplaying and thinking superfluous. Contacts are totally under the control of the Galaxy Master. Even powerful and influential contacts from this rank should be kept under a tight rein. See *Contacts (R1)* for more information.

Contacts (R3)

The contact or contacts chosen should be nearly super-normal, supernatural, or uncanny in origin or far reaching in scope. For example, a character's *Contact (R3)* might be an "spacefarer's guild" with multi-system branch offices and an impressive ability to get its members the oddest things.

Work with the Galaxy Master to come up with some interesting contacts. It might be a group of psionic monks who can be called upon for "mental aid"- or maybe a really complete technical library.

Restrictions/Notes: Again, as with *Contacts (R1)* and *(R2)*, don't let the contacts take over the game- and don't let the player's character abuse them. Contacts are Galaxy Master controlled, but they will usually only be brought into play at the character's request.

Contacts (R4)

There is some sort of strange "force" that "watches over" and occasionally helps the character. In many ways, this Advantage is not as useful in most adventure situations as the other versions of Contacts, but it can have dramatic effects on occasion.

Some examples of this include a particularly powerful Galaxy Master character who steps in occasionally to help the character when he's in trouble. Or, a large governmental agency might, for some reason, want to step in and aid the character at times.

Generally, the character can get minor assistance- as could be gotten from *Contacts (R1)* or *Contacts (R2)* - on a fairly regular basis - and under the same sort of circumstances as having lower versions of Contacts - but "the big stuff" only happens when the Galaxy Master thinks it appropriate. The character might get killed before the *Contacts (R4)* intervenes- maybe the character just wasn't doing something the Contact felt was important to it- but, most likely, assistance come, though perhaps at the last minute.

Restrictions/Notes: Players' characters should take this option only if they want to take Disadvantages relating to it. For example, if a character in a space opera campaign wants to have a group of super-scientists who like him and will supply him with substantial aid on a regular basis (like a space ranger who gets outfitted with new equipment at the beginning of every adventure and who can call for more during certain times in the adventure), then he should take Disadvantages that relate to that. The character could be a member of an organization (see the Disadvantage *Employed*), or he must do reciprocating favors for the providing company (see the Disadvantage *Price*), or there are equally powerful people who want to eliminate him because of his contacts (see the Disadvantage *Enemy*).

If the character does not want to take extensive Disadvantages relating to the contact, then Contacts (R4) should be unpredictable and not always useful. For example, the company might provide the character with plenty of extraordinary equipment, but it might not always be what the character needs or might not work correctly all of the time.

Equipment (R1)

The character gains a piece of equipment he would not normally have because it is too expensive or "unavailable," but only if it is allowable under the game setting. For instance, a character could start the game with a small laser pistol, but not a mini rocket launcher- unless the Galaxy Master runs a lawless

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setting, as the latter is quite powerful, it should be generally unavailable for civilian use and even characters with military backgrounds should have to take the *Equipment (R2)* Advantage to get it.

Alternatively, the character could take lots of little pieces of equipment instead – more than what the Galaxy Master would normally allow. Basically, equipment totaling in cost not more than about 1,000 credits (or a price Difficulty of Moderate) would fit in this category.

Restrictions/Notes: Typically, as long as the character is not careless with it, Equipment taken with any rank of this Advantage is replaceable, unless the Burn-out Disadvantage is included with it. *Equipment (R1)* may be selected more than once or in combination with higher ranks of the *Equipment* Advantage with Galaxy Master approval.

Equipment (R2)

The character gains a piece of equipment that would be difficult to obtain because of expense or availability. Weapons that are usually out of reach of the normal citizen are available. Similarly, equipment totaling in cost not more than several thousand credits (or a price Difficulty of difficult) would probably be okay. In game settings that have rare alien technology, objects of fairly low power probably could be obtained using this Advantage.

Restrictions/Notes: See *Equipment (R1)* for more information. *Equipment (R2)* may be selected more than once or in combination with higher ranks of the *Equipment* Advantage with Galaxy Master approval.

Equipment (R3)

Items of equipment that are normally unavailable to just about anyone can be picked up using this Advantage. Any one item on any equipment chart can be selected, or the Galaxy Master can make up a “special” item that has unusual effects or Special Abilities. Alternatively, they can just be really expensive or virtually unavailable items. Equipment totaling a few tens of thousands of dollars (or a price Difficulty of Heroic) falls under this category.

Restrictions/Notes: The Galaxy Master should watch this Advantage carefully. It can only be selected once at character creation– though the Rank 1 and Rank 2 versions can also be selected – but it can still unbalance a beginning character. Generally, things that can be taken away fairly easily– like energy swords, military hardware, super-science gadgets, and other related equipment– would be suitably appropriate for characters with minimal experience.

Equipment (R4)

Really bizarre and, most likely, powerful equipment is open to the character –but only one such piece or a collection of small, related pieces. For very powerful items, no-one else can use the equipment without making some sort of exhaustive skill total, and it can probably not be repaired or duplicated. “Special effects” equipment fits into this category.

The equipment could be a weapon more powerful than most personal weapons in the game setting. Or it could be a Metaphysics manipulation that could not normally be used by the character or anyone else in the world at its relatively low Difficulty. Or it could be a collection of gadgets and gizmos that can perform many different mundane tasks– but how, nobody knows.

Restrictions/Notes: The character should have Disadvantages related to the equipment. Maybe

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Enemies want to steal it, or it has an Advantage Flaw so it doesn't work all the time- or the same way every time. In addition, the equipment should not make the character so powerful that opponents fall before him. In game mechanic terms, the equipment should be a just slightly more powerful or more useful item than what is available normally. The more powerful the item, the more Disadvantages and restrictions should be related to it.

***Example:** A player might choose to give her character an average blaster and increase the damage score by two points. As this is a modest adjustment, her Galaxy Master also allows the gun to never need reloading.*

Fame (R1)

The character, for some reason, is fairly well known. The extent of the character's fame should be determined by the game setting. In a global game setting, the character has moderate recognition value in a particular region. In a smaller game setting (like post-nuclear war settings restricted to one planet), the character might have more dense penetration of recognition, but with less wide-sweeping effects (for instance, everyone in town knows who they are, but no one from more than a few days' travel away has ever heard of them).

Whenever the Galaxy Master thinks the character might be recognized (and the Fame Advantage would come into play), the Galaxy Master should roll 3D. If the result is 15 or higher, the character is recognized. Otherwise, he will have to do something "special" and appropriate for why he's famous to be recognized (and gain the benefits of recognition).

If a character with Fame (R1) is recognized, he should gain small perks, like being seated in a restaurant early, avoiding small legal hassles (like routine customs checks), or just be treated generally better (perhaps the character gets a couple of bonus points to persuasion, con, and command attempts). Like most roleplayed Advantages, the Galaxy Master should decide on the results.

***Restrictions/Notes:** Fame may be chosen multiple times as long as the player defines how each Fame is different. For example, a character might have *Fame (R1)* in regards to his fighting abilities, but another type of Fame pertaining to his intelligence or some other ability.*

Fame (R2)

The character is very well known. In a global setting, the character would probably be recognized in most fairly civilized cultures and almost definitely in her home culture. The Galaxy Master should roll 3D and, on a 15 or higher, a person from another culture recognizes the person and react (usually favorably). In the character's own culture, this reaction comes on an 8 or more. If the character draws attention to herself in her own culture (identifies herself), then the reaction will most likely be automatic (Galaxy Master's option).

***Restrictions/Notes:** At this level of fame, the character should be treated like a famous author, an occasional holo-vid star, or a reasonably recognizable sports figure. Some Galaxy Master characters will be immune to this fame, but most will have some sort of (generally positive) reaction. Otherwise, see Fame (R1) for more information.*

Fame (R3)

There is a pretty good chance anyone in the game setting (unless it is a multi-world setting) will

recognize the character (or what the character is) fairly easily. The base die total needed is 8, and it can be modified by circumstance. The character has the status of a holo-vid star, a famous politician, or a top-ranked sports hero.

Restrictions/Notes: As with *Fame (R1)* and *Fame (R2)* – certain people just won't be impressed. In addition, characters with *Fame (R3)* should almost always have to take the Disadvantage *Infamy* at least Rank 1 – no matter how nice, talented, or generally well-liked a person is, there's always somebody out there who wishes them harm.

Patron (R1)

The odds are that most players' characters are not independently wealthy. But they might have access to wealth in the form of patrons. If the characters are treasure hunters, patrons might include museums, universities, private philanthropists, news agencies, megacorporations, or even retired adventurers.

Patron (R1) means the character has a backer who will fund one expedition, with all proceeds going to the patron. All of the costs (room, board, travel, expenses) are covered by the patron, with the understanding that the player's character is basically just a worker-for-hire. Anything that the adventurer discovers or purchases becomes the property of the patron.

Patron (R2)

A *Patron (R2)* expects much less from those she backs. Though the character may receive less financial support, she gains a greater freedom of action.

A news agency looking for hot stories is a common example of an organization qualifying for *Patron (R2)*. They cover a character's travel expenses and any legal fees in exchange for inspiring stories. Anything that the character finds on his own (like artifacts) remain his own.

Patron (R3)

A *Patron (R3)* gives a character a limited stipend and covers most expenses, then offers to purchase whatever the character recovers. Without consistent results, the funding will be cut off.

Size (R1 or more)

The character is much larger or smaller than the average Human. For every rank in this Advantage, the player receives up to +3 to his character's scale modifier (which starts at zero). The player must specify whether the character is bigger or smaller than the average Human.

Restrictions/Notes: Generally, the character's weight is proportional for his height, but a Disadvantage, such as *Hindrance: Reduced Toughness*, or a Special Ability, such as *Hardiness*, could be used to represent a very thin or very large character (respectively). Likewise, to reflect a longer stride, the character should have the *Hypermovement* Special Ability, while a shorter stride would get the *Hindrance: Shorter Stride* Disadvantage. Obviously, no character may take the *Size: Large* and the *Size: Small* Advantages.

Trademark Specialization (R)

This Advantage works a lot like a combination of the *Skill Bonus* Special Ability and *Fame*. The character excels at one very specific thing, and he is known for it. Choose any specialization that the character has (or would like to have in the future), and the character gains +2D to the roll when it is used. In addition, when the character uses it, at the Galaxy Master's option, people acknowledge how "naturally good" the character is at the specialization, and this might produce interesting situations. Also, the character might be contacted or recognized by certain people because of how good he is at that one specialization.

Restrictions/Notes: This character acts as if trained in the use of this skill. No character may have more than two *Trademark Specializations*.

Wealth (R) or more)

The character with this Advantage probably has an estate or a series of investments that will keep him comfortable for a good long time. Alternatively, the character could be minor nobility, have a large trust fund, or be married to the owner of a large corporation. This doesn't mean the character can buy everything- he is still subject to the availability of items.

For each rank in this Advantage, the characters has 5,000 credits in readily available cash once per month. The accounts never have more than 5,000 credits times the number of ranks each month (fees and living expenses keep it to that level); the amount could be less by the end of the month.

Additionally, adventure bonuses could temporarily raise the figure, though the character would have to purchase an additional rank of *Wealth* to make the increase permanent. Players in games using the Funds attribute gain +2 per rank to all such totals.

Restrictions/Notes: Characters should select only one rank of *Wealth*, unless there is some reason they might have *Wealth (R)* and another rank of *Wealth* in other circumstances. Also, this wealth does not always help and disappears if misused (and it should be a major concern to the character at times), but it should be there most of the time. Galaxy Masters will probably think of ways to work around wealth and players should play along- if you can throw money at every problem, then they aren't that much fun to try to solve, are they?

The most likely Disadvantage a character with *Wealth* would have is *Devotion*, such as "helping all those in need" or "righting all wrong doing." Otherwise, there should be fairly extensive reasons why the character can't use his wealth to resolve every situation - or hire somebody to do it for him (which is really the same thing).

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Before allowing players to create characters with Special Abilities, the Galaxy Master may wish to peruse this list to see if there are any she would prefer not to appear in her games. She may also decide that certain Special Abilities require specific Limitations on them or Disadvantages on the character.

Any Special Ability that gives a bonus to the die roll or the skill total also allows the character to use that skill as if trained. Bonuses received from taking multiple ranks of the same Special Ability are

added together.

Skills gained with a Special Ability are not improved when that Special Ability is improved. Instead, they are increased as a normal skill.

Unless stated otherwise in the Special Ability, it does not count as an action for the character to get the bonus from a Special Ability. However, except for such automatic abilities as *Natural Armor* or *Combat Sense*, the character must state that she is relying on the Special Ability or she does not receive the bonus.

Accelerated Healing (3)

The character gains a +1D per rank to his *Strength* for all natural healing attempts, and a Critical Failure is treated as 1, rather than having a negative effect on the die roll.

Ambidextrous (2)

The character is equally adept with her right or left hand. She may perform an action with each hand in the same round, and, though she takes the multi-action penalty, she receives a +1 per rank to each skill total. The actions must involve the hands and each action must require only one hand. If the character performs only one hand-related action in a round, she does not get the bonus. Some skills that characters could employ with either hand include brawling, sleight of hand, firearms, throwing, lift, artist, forgery, and the map-making aspect of navigation, though, of course, not every task covered by each skill is relevant. A character may take multiple ranks of this Special Ability for two pairs of hands and multiple ranks for each additional manipulative limb.

Animal Control (3)

This gives the character the ability to control one particular species of animal, bird, or insect. The character gets a +1D bonus to her survival: animal handling total for that species. She must generate a survival: animal handling versus the *Knowledge* or *Willpower* of the animal (more than one animal can be targeted, although this is a multi-action). If the character gets a high enough success (Galaxy Master's decision), the animal is controlled for a number of minutes equal to the survival: animal handling skill total times 10. A controlled animal serves its master faithfully, even sacrificing itself on her behalf. The Special Ability has a range of sight or voice. The character may gain one more species for each rank.

Note: A swarm of insects counts as one animal, as does a school of small fish. Any creature with a *Knowledge* die code of less than 2D could be considered an animal, unless the Galaxy Master says otherwise.

Armor-Defeating Attack (2)

When a character with natural weapons (the character's fists, claws, teeth, etc.) attacks someone protected by armor, this ability negates the *Armor Value*, up to +1D per rank. The character must specify how the attack negates the armor: an acidic mist slips through any openings, nanotech claws reach directly to the flesh, and the like. There should be at least one type of armor that is unaffected by this.

Atmospheric Tolerance (2)

The character can breathe one form of atmosphere (gas or liquid) that would be lethal to most other characters. A character may not have more than one rank in this ability, but he may have different versions for different atmospheres.

Attack Resistance (2)

The character is highly resistant to a certain type of attack. She gains +1D per rank to her damage resistance total against this type of attack.

Energy Attacks: Resistant to blasts of heat, fire, electricity, radiation, light, cold, and so on, but not the ability to survive in extremes of such environments.

Extrnormal Attack: Resistant to damage from any Extrnormal-based (such as *Metaphysics*) attack.

Mental Attacks: Resistant to mental harm from any source. It does not provide protection against interaction attempts.

Attribute Scramble (4)

The character can adjust an opponent's (or a friend's) attributes temporarily. She gains the *Scramble* skill at +1 per rank in a single version of this Special Ability (it is a *Perception* skill, described only here), which she also can increase as a normal skill. The scrambler must pick as her focus either physical or mental attributes, though never Extrnormal, Funds, or Special Abilities. (Physical attributes encompass *Agility*, *Strength*, and *Mechanical*. Mental attributes include *Knowledge*, *Perception*, and *Technical*.) She only may do both by taking this Special Ability once for each version.

When she goes after a target with a *Brawling* roll, she may choose (as a multi-action) to also perform a scramble attack versus a roll of her target's *Willpower* or *Knowledge*. (This is not an action for the target.) No close combat attack is necessary for a willing target, though the *Willpower* or *Knowledge* must still be made. However, the act of scrambling still counts as an action.

If the scrambler's total is higher (not equal to), she may shift her target's attribute points around, within certain limits. The close combat attack does no damage.

She may increase one or more related attributes by a number equal to the amount she takes away from other related attributes - but she may not decrease or increase any one attribute by more than 2D (6 pips).

The change lasts for a number of rounds equal to the difference between the scramble attack and the target's *Willpower* or *Knowledge*. A character who has been adjusted cannot be scrambled again until the original adjustment wears off.

Blur (3)

The character can appear indistinct to the naked eye or most visual aids (binoculars, cameras, etc.). Commonly, a character with this Special Ability will only be spotted out of the corner of the eye. This adds 1 to the character's *Dodge*, *Sneak*, and *Hide* totals, as well as +1 to all default search, investigation, and attack difficulties against the character that the blurring character is not actively trying to defeat. (These modifiers are per rank in this Special Ability.) On the character's turn, she may

automatically become blurry, without taking an action, and remain so until she chooses otherwise. Blurring also makes it difficult for the character to hold a conversation with others.

Combat Sense (3)

The character can sense danger. She is never surprised. Rather, she and her attacker must determine initiative as normal. Even if the attacker still goes before the character does, any combat modifier from the surprise is reduced by 2. A character may not have this ability more than once.

Confusion (4)

The character can hamper the thoughts of those he comes into physical contact with, at will. He gains the confuse skill at +1 per rank (it is a *Perception* skill, described only here), which he can increase as normal.

As a multi-action with a brawling attack, he may also perform a confusion attack versus his target's *willpower* or *Knowledge*. (This is not an action for the target.) If his total is higher (not equal to), the target is confused. Characters may not play cards (if the Galaxy Master is using game-enhancing cards with the adventures) or spend points, and they receive a +5 Difficulty modifier to even simple actions for a number of rounds equal to two times the rank of this Special Ability.

Darkness (3)

The character can project a field of darkness around himself, adding +5 per rank to the Difficulty of any sight-based skill totals. The field extends in a half-sphere around the character with a radius equal to one meter per rank. The field can be maintained for a maximum of one minute per rank before dispersing.

Elasticity (1)

The character can stretch, elongate, and compress his body, allowing him to expand his height or become so narrow he can pass through keyholes, cracks, or any other opening he could normally see through. It takes one round or more to slip through small openings, depending on their depth. The character gains +1 per rank to *Acrobatics*, *Dodge*, or *Sleight of Hand* totals, in addition to *Con* totals when using that skill to disguise his own appearance.

Endurance (1)

The character has great endurance, and gains a +3D per rank to *Strength* or *Stamina* checks when performing taxing physical tasks (such as holding one's breath underwater for a long period or running a long distance).

Enhanced Sense (3)

One of the character's five senses is heightened to abnormal levels. The bonus to the skill total received depends on the sense: sight is +1; hearing is +2; touch, taste, or smell are +3. The bonus is per rank and applies to all skills related to the sense. To have multiple enhanced senses, this Special Ability must be taken at least once for each sense.

Environmental Resistance (1)

The character is resistant to extremes of heat, cold, and pressure and gains a +3D per rank to *Strength* or *Stamina* checks to resist ill effects from these environmental conditions. The character is not resistant to heat or cold attacks, as these come and go too quickly for the Special Ability to provide protection.

Extra Body Part (0)

The character has an extra limb or organ. If external, these may be secondary arms or legs, a tail, or some more exotic bodily addition, such as fins, tentacles, or antennae. If internal, the parts are organs such as extra eyes, hearts, or mysterious glands. Unless specified by a Disadvantage or Limitation, the extra parts are included in the hero's body tastefully. Additionally, except in cases where the character has an Enhancement or another Special Ability that uses this one (for example, *Extra Body Part: Tail* and *Natural Hand-to-Hand Weapon: Tail*), the extra part is nonfunctional. A character may have only one rank in this Special Ability, but she may have multiple versions to represent multiple additional organs or limbs.

Extra Sense (1)

The character can detect something that a normal Human cannot, such as changes in pressure, seismic activity, radiation fluctuations, and so on. She gains a +1D to her search rolls in attempting to detect the specific energy or environmental change and +1D to her investigation rolls in figuring out source or other relevant information. The Galaxy Master may also allow a +1 skill total bonus to other activities that would benefit from whatever the extra sense can detect. All modifiers are per rank in this Special Ability.

Fast Reactions (3)

The character gains +1D per rank to his *Perception* when determining initiative, and, for up to three times during the adventure, he may receive one additional action for one round.

Fear (2)

The character can provoke fear in those who can see or hear him. He gains a +1 per rank to all *Intimidation* totals and combat defense difficulties against those so affected. The *Willpower* or *Knowledge* difficulty to resist a Fear attack is 15.

Flight (6)

The character can fly, either by nature or by virtue of having wings. The character's flying rate equals his base *Move* times 2 times the number of ranks. The *Flying/D-G* skill is required to maneuver.

Glider Wings (3)

The character can fly by drifting with air currents, provided there is sufficient wind. The Galaxy Master decides how much wind there is available and how fast it moves the glider. Characters with this Special Ability need the *Flying/D-G* skill to control their passage. A character may not have this ability

more than once.

Hardiness (1)

The character can take damage better than normal. She adds 1 per rank to her damage resistance total against any type of damage.

Hypermovement (1)

The character is extremely fast, adding +2 meters per round per rank to her base *Move* rate, which in turn affects all other types of movement.

Immortality (7)

The character is immortal, though she will grow older, at a decreased pace compared to the rest of her species. If she is reduced to zero Body Points, she doesn't die. She will not go unconscious or bleed to death (as mortally wounded characters do), but she will not heal without psionic or similar special aid or the *Accelerated Healing* Special Ability- her arms could be blown off, her abdomen eviscerated, or whatever. She may perform only the most minimal of physical actions, such as squirming, and some actions may be impossible. She may rely on her Agility for initiative purposes only.

There should be one particular set of circumstances whereby the character will die forever. These sets of circumstances should not be too unusual- killed directly by an Extrnormal blast, drowning decapitation, and so on are all good examples.

A character may not have this ability more than once.

Immunity (1)

The character is highly resistant to disease and poisons and receives a +1D per rank to *Strength* or *Stamina* checks when determining whether he has contracted an illness or suffering from ingested poisons.

Increased Attribute (2)

Some extraordinary training or physiological trait allows the character to gain +1 bonus per rank to all rolled totals related to that attribute.

(For *Strength*, this also includes the damage resistance total and Strength Damage.) A character may have multiple ranks of this Special Ability, as well as multiple versions of it.

Note: To get another rank in this Special Ability after character creation costs 4 times the number in front of the "D" of the attribute that it affects plus the number of ranks currently in the Special Ability. (This is instead of the normal cost to increase Special Abilities.)

Infravision/Ultravision (1)

The character gains the ability to see in the dark using either infravision or ultravision. *Infravision* allows the character to see changes in heat, while *ultra-vision* enables the character to make the most of the

available light. Each provides a +2 per rank in a single version of this Special Ability to sight-based rolls while in dim or dark conditions. Obviously, extreme heat or bright light (including daylight) prevent this Special Ability from working.

Intangibility (5)

The character can reduce his physical density to virtually zero for one minute per rank. During that time, his damage resistance score against physical and energy attacks is +3D per rank, but his movement rate is halved. An intangible character can pass through solid objects, providing they do not contain wards or other spells of protection designed to repel passage of this nature. He may not pass through energy or electrified barriers. While intangible, the character cannot carry any object along (including clothing), nor can he attempt any physical attack. It takes a full round for a character to become intangible or solid, during which he can do nothing else. The character must spend at least one minute solid before attempting intangibility again.

Invisibility (3)

The character can become transparent. This adds 1 per rank to the character's *Dodge*, *Sneak*, and *Hide* totals, as well as +1 per rank to all default *Search*, *Investigation*, and attack difficulties against the character that the invisible character is not actively trying to defeat. Additionally, no character may take an action to "spot" the character unless the game-master feels there is sufficient provocation, such as brushing against others or removing something in a crowded area.

The invisibility covers the character's basic clothes only – not any gear she's carrying, or anything she picks up. Also, remember that the character is transparent when invisible – she can't hide things behind her back.

Iron Will (2)

The character is highly resistant to all interaction attempts and mental attacks. The character gains a +1D per rank to all *Willpower* rolls and +2 to the standard Difficulty of any such attempts against this character.

Life Drain (5)

This ability allows the character to drain attribute pips, Body Points, or Wounds from his target. The character must choose one set of attributes to target, either physical (*Agility*, *Mechanical*, *Strength*), mental (*Knowledge*, *Perception*, *Technical*), Wounds, or Body Points. For example, most vampires drink blood, and thus lower Body Points, while succubi target the soul and so weaken mental attributes. The player must specify in what manner the character drains these attributes (biting the neck, hypnosis, or another means). It should involve some sort of successful attack result (either physical or mental).

When the character wishes to employ Life Drain, he makes an attack on his target using the relevant skill. For every four points over the target's defense roll, the character drains one pip per rank off each of the target's relevant attributes or three points per rank from the character's Body Points or one Wound for every two ranks. (Remember that there are three pips in each die.)

If any of the target's attributes or Body Points ever go to zero (or the character reaches the Dead

Wound level), the target goes into a coma. She may try once per day to wake up by making a successful Moderate *Stamina* or *Strength* roll. She regains one attribute point (to each attribute affected) every hour after the attack. Body Points and Wound levels return at the normal rate.

For each attribute pip the character drains, he may add one pip to any attribute in his chosen category. He would get one Body Point for each Body Point drained or one Wound for each Wound drained.

Life-Drained attributes and unused Body Points or Wounds disappear at a rate of one pip or point per hour. A character may have multiple ranks of this Special Ability, as well as multiple versions of it.

Longevity (3)

The character lives longer than the average Human. Often, this Special Ability has a Flaw attached that governs what the character must do to maintain his life. The character should gain peripheral bonuses during game play because of his "longer outlook." A character may not have this ability more than once.

Luck, Good (2)

The character is blessed with unusually good luck. Once per adventure, a character with Good Luck can receive one of the following benefits just by asking for it: action, breakthrough, haste, or second chance. See the "Luck Benefits" sidebar for details on each of these options. Calling upon one's luck does not count as an action.

Good Luck can only be declared once per rank during a particular adventure, but it may be declared at any time, and it cannot be canceled by any other effect. A character may have up to two ranks of this Special Ability.

Luck Benefits

Action: Add 2 to all of the character's skill or attribute totals for the round.

Alertness: When the character calls upon this benefit, he gains a special "sixth sense" outside of all other rules and roleplaying situations that will help him to spot a previously unseen item, character, or clue selected by the Galaxy Master. The benefit does not confer omniscience, however — and the Galaxy Master can select her own time for having it come into effect. It is normally used to allow a character to spot something he missed in a previous search, something that is important to the adventure.

Breakthrough: Add 1D to any one skill die code in which the character has no additional pips or dice (in other words, a skill in which the character is untrained). The benefit also eliminates the unskilled modifier for using that skill.

Haste: Gain one additional action for one round.

Hero: Receive one bonus Fate Point, which must be used on an action immediately after requesting it.

Opponent Fails: After an opponent or enemy has completed an action against the character, this benefit may be called upon to cancel the effects entirely. The opponent's action is then wasted, and play continues. This benefit may not be used to cancel an action that is not directed at least partially at

the lucky character.

Second Chance: Using this benefit allows the character to attempt any action she has just tried again, from the very beginning. Relying on this benefit, however, may not be used to negate “bad choices” — the action performed must be performed again — nor does it allow the character to “get back” Fate Points, Character Points, or cards (if used) spent on the original action. The character merely gets another chance, immediately following the first attempt, to perform the action again. All effects from the first attempt are negated.

Luck Notes

A character may have up to two ranks each in *Good Luck* and *Great Luck*. This Special Ability can be taken with the Bad Luck

Disadvantage — sometimes really good things happen, sometimes really bad things happen.

Luck, Great (3)

A character with *Great Luck* can call on one of the following benefits once per adventure per rank: action, alertness, breakthrough, haste, hero, opponent fails, or second chance. See the “Luck Benefits” sidebar for details on each of these options. Calling upon one’s luck does not count as an action.

If the character has not used his Great Luck during an adventure and something really disastrous happens, the Galaxy Master may choose to counteract the effects and temporarily “burn out” the character’s Special Ability— that is, the character’s *Great Luck* has been used up for the adventure. Usually, this is used when the character does something stupid or the player is the victim of incredibly bad luck— die rolling, not the Disadvantage—and something “stops” the effect. This is a “last ditch” Galaxy Master-controlled effort when circumstances get out of control. It is also a nice thing for inexperienced roleplayers to have— just in case they do something they really shouldn’t have, they get another chance.

Example: *The character’s mission is to turn off the power at a nuclear plant or it will explode and destroy the city that’s conveniently downwind. Unfortunately, the character takes too long fighting the minions of the bad guy who set the plant to overload, and, according to the rules, the whole city should go up in a radioactive fireball. The character is too late. The Galaxy Master might choose to have the character be really lucky— the villain was bluffing, and there’s really more time on the clock than anyone thought, or the power plant begins a long meltdown procedure instead of exploding. In any case, the character’s Good Luck is gone for this adventure (his luck ran out), but he has a chance of averting disaster.*

As with *Good Luck*, the character may have up to two ranks of this Special Ability.

Master of Disguise (3)

The character has a natural talent for disguise. She gains a +5 per rank bonus to con totals when using that skill to disguise herself and a +1D bonus per rank to any *Con*, *Intimidation*, or *Persuasion* actions while in that disguise.

Multiple Abilities (1)

The character has multiple minor abilities that improve a few different tasks. All bonuses are added to

the skill or attribute total, not to the die code. The bonuses should be fairly limited in their applications, pertaining to specific uses of particular skills (like specializations do), but there can be several of them for each selection of this Special Ability. The maximum total bonus for each rank is +4.

Example: A character could have "eyestalks" that give him a +1 bonus to Perception or search totals that would negate surprise, the ability to focus his ears on particular types of noises (+1 bonus when listening for particular sounds), and fingers that are sensitive to subdermal motion (+1 bonus to sleight of hand against safes with moving tumblers).

Natural Armor (3)

The character has plates, toughened skin, scales, or something similar. His own surface adds 1D per rank to his damage resistance total to physical (not mental) attacks and contact poisons, corrosives, or similar materials.

Natural Hand-to-Hand Weapon (2)

The character has some sort of natural weapon- such as claws, pincers, bone spikes, or stinger - that add 1D per rank to his Strength Damage when determining his damage with the natural weapon. The character uses brawling to attack, unless he can detach the weapon from himself or (in the case of a super-scientific weapon) its exists separately. In these latter cases, the character employs melee combat to wield it.

Natural Ranged Weapon (3)

The character has some sort of natural ranged weapon, using missile weapons (for solid objects) or firearms (for energy, gas, or chemical projection or for solid projectiles in cybernetics or super-science weapons) to target it. Long range equals 20 times the number of ranks in this Special Ability times the character's *Strength*, *Lift*, or *Firearms* (as appropriate) in meters. The damage for physically enhanced projections is the character's Strength Damage plus 1D per rank, while the damage for all other types of blasts is 3D per rank. The projection must have a visible effect (such as bone shards or a glowing ray) and it may not do mental damage. Note that, regardless of the nature of the projection, there are no additional effects from this type of Special Ability unless an Enhancement allows otherwise.

Omnivorous (2)

The character can gain nourishment from any organic substance (though she is not immune to poisons). She can also chew through just about any organic substance with no adverse effects to her teeth or jaws. A character may not have this ability more than once.

Paralyzing Touch (4)

The character can freeze her target with the merest touch. When she makes a brawling attack, she may, instead of doing damage, paralyze her victim, who remains that way until he makes a successful *Knowledge* or *Willpower* roll against the *Brawling* skill total. He may attempt to do so once per round; the only other actions he may take are mental-based ones and Extranormal (such as *Metaphysics*) or Special Ability ones that do not require movement.

Note: Characters who are heavily armored or covered will be harder to hit. The Galaxy Master needs to decide how much skin is exposed and adjust the attack Difficulty accordingly.

A character may not have this ability more than once.

Possession, Limited (8)

The character can possess the body of a living creature or a corpse. The character must be within three times the rank of this Special Ability in meters of the target in order to take possession.

Possessing a corpse doesn't require a roll, but it does take an action. Possessing a living being involves making a *Knowledge* or *Willpower* check by the possessor versus a standard interaction Difficulty (see the "Mental Defenses" sidebar on page 85 for details). Exceeding (but not equaling) the Difficulty means the target has been possessed. The target can actively defend if she is aware of the potential danger.

To gather knowledge about his host body's life, the possessing character must generate a successful investigation total against the target's *Knowledge* roll (this does not count as an action for the target). Information the possessor gains depends upon the level of success achieved; see the accompanying chart for details.

With *Limited Possession*, the character does not gain control of the new form. Instead, he must use persuasion, intimidation, or other interaction skills to convince his host to do what he wishes.

Exiting a host body is commonly a simple action. As long as the possessing character exits before the host dies, he simply moves on to his own or another form. Killing a possessing spirit usually involves taking it completely by surprise with a killing blow to the host form or using a spell to force it to remain in the body until it can be slain.

Possession Knowledge Chart

Result Points*	Knowledge Attained
0	Basic information: target's name, age, base of operations
1-4	More personal information: target's job, financial status, any current schedule
5-8	More in-depth personal information: identities and backgrounds of family, friends, lovers
9-12	Very personal information: secrets, private likes and dislikes, and so on
13	Everything there is to know

**Result points equal the difference between the investigation total and the target's Knowledge roll.*

Possession, Full (10)

The character can possess the body of a living creature or a corpse. This works in the same way as Limited Possession, save that the possessing character gains her new form's physical attributes (*Agility*, *Mechanical*, *Strength*), retains her own Extramormal and mental attributes (*Knowledge*, *Perception*, and *Technical*), and gains complete control over the new form.

Quick Study (3)

The character has an uncanny ability to learn new skills and improve old ones, limited to one attribute.

He always learns new skills as if he had a teacher (even if he doesn't), and he can improve skills he already knows at a cost of one Character Point less than normal. This Special Ability applies to specializations as well as combines very well with the *Age Disadvantage*, if the character is young - he is a prodigy, and that's why he's learned his starting skills so quickly. This Special Ability can be taken once for each attribute.

Sense of Direction (2)

The character has a good sense of direction. He gains +1D per rank to *Navigation* and *Search* rolls.

Shapeshifting (3)

The character can manipulate the shape, color, and overall appearance of her body, though mass and body compositions remain the same. The character must chose a specific creature to emulate, gaining one form for every three additional points spent on this Special Ability. At six ranks in this ability, the Galaxy Master may allow shifting among one class of creatures (such as birds or furniture) as long as all forms chosen for previous ranks were within the same class.

Body Points, Wounds, and the *Knowledge* attribute remain unaffected by this Special Ability, but the dice in the *Agility*, *Mechanical*, *Strength*, *Perception*, and *Technical* are redistributed to match the new form. The minimum Mechanical and Technical for non-humanoid forms is 1D, because the shapeshifter retains some memory of these attributes. Additional dice in skills above the base attribute score remain the same, though the total dice in each skill changes to reflect the adjustments in the base attribute. Likewise, not all skills will be usable in the new form.

Attribute dice can also be used to include Special Abilities in the new form. One attribute die can be spent to gain one rank in one Special Ability or to get a +2 skill total bonus (split among up to two skills). The Galaxy Master may allow a larger skill total bonus or more skills to fall under the bonus if the desired effect is particularly narrow (such as a bonus for a single sense).

For an example of how *Shapeshifting* can work, see the accompanying sidebar.

Shapeshifting may be done at will, though a Limitation may force it to be triggered by stress or environmental factors.

If shifting voluntarily, the character must generate a willpower total of 11 to bring about the change, and a second total to turn back again. Each change takes one full round in which the character may do nothing else. Failure at the check means the transformation does not occur, and the character cannot try again for at least an hour.

It is highly recommended that the hero comes up with some typical forms and their game characteristics before beginning play. The new form need not exactly resemble a "typical" version of the emulated creature or object.

Shapeshifting Example

Mark is playing a wereleopard. He chooses *Shapeshifting*, specifying that he will only change from Human to leopard and back again. The Galaxy Master decides he'll gain one rank of the *Hypermovement* Special Ability (+2 to the movement rate) and +2 to all *Search* totals that require smell when in his wereleopard form.

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Mark's character has 18 attribute dice arranged thusly:

AGILITY 2D+2
STRENGTH 3D
KNOWLEDGE 2D+2
PERCEPTION 2D+2
MECHANICAL 3D+1
TECHNICAL 3D+2

When he changes into wereleopard form, Mark's character has the following attribute values, the total of which has been lowered by 2D because of the bonuses:

AGILITY 4D
STRENGTH 3D+2
KNOWLEDGE 2D+2
PERCEPTION 3D+2
MECHANICAL 1D
TECHNICAL 1D

Silence (3)

The character can move in complete silence. He gains +2D per rank to all *Sneak* checks and a +1D per rank when attacking from behind.

Skill Bonus (1)

Skill Bonus represents a natural talent (a character with the Charismatic group might be "friendly and outgoing"), a particular knack (a character with the Ranged Combat group has a "keen eye"), years of devotion to a profession prior to beginning adventure, or the result of an extended life.

The character chooses a group of three related skills in which he gains +1 to the skill total of any action performed with those skills (or specializations of that skill). The skills need not be under the same attribute. The character may or may not actually have adds in those skills, and the Galaxy Master must approve the fact that they are "related." Some examples of skill groups include:

- ▲ **Acting:** *Bargain; Con; Persuasion*
- ▲ **Acute Balance:** *Acrobatics; Climb/Jump; Sneak*
- ▲ **Athletics:** *Lift; Running; Throwing*
- ▲ **Charismatic:** *Command; Con; Persuasion*
- ▲ **Close Combat:** *Brawling; Melee Combat; Dodge*
- ▲ **Investigative:** *Investigation; Search; Streetwise*
- ▲ **Leadership:** *Command; Intimidation; Persuasion*
- ▲ **Photographic Memory:** *Languages; Scholar; Investigation*
- ▲ **Observant:** *Gambling; Investigation; Search*

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▲ **Ranged Combat:** Firearms; Missile Weapons; Throwing

Players may substitute other related skills for the ones listed in the groups above, or create their own groups as long as there is a common thread and the Galaxy Master approves the grouping.

Three specializations may replace one general skill, getting a +1 for three different specializations.

***Example:** In the Close Combat group, a character might replace melee combat with three specializations - melee combat: knives, melee combat: swords, and melee combat: clubs. While this means the character gains no bonus for "general" melee combat activities (such as using an improvised weapon), he does have a more "detailed" group. This may be done for up to all three skills in the group, choosing six specializations instead of two skills or nine specializations instead of three skills.*

Additionally, the character acts as if trained in these skills even if he doesn't have any additional pips in them, and so does not get the unskilled modifier. This Special Ability does not affect the cost of improving the related skills.

Galaxy Masters may allow a higher bonus for fewer skills (such as a set of two skills where one gets a +1 bonus and the other gets a +2 bonus, or a +3 bonus to a set of three specializations). However, the bonus per rank may total no more than +3.

At each additional rank, the player may increase the bonus by +1 for three of the skills affected by this Special Ability. A character may have different versions of this ability for different groups of skills, though the skills in each group may not overlap.

Skill Minimum (4)

The character can select three related skills unaffected by any other sort of Special Ability and the character will always gain a minimum total of 3 times the number before the "D," even if she rolls a Critical Failure.

***Example:** If the player selects persuasion, con, and intimidation (all interaction skills) for her character, all of which she has at 4D, and she generates a less than 12, the total automatically becomes 12. That is the character's minimum total.*

The player may not select Skill Minimum for any skill that has any other Advantage or Special Ability tied to it.

Also, the skills must be related in some way (see the Skill Bonus Special Ability for information on related skills). The character may only select general skills, but the specializations underneath that general skill are affected as well. This Special Ability may be selected only once for each group of skills.

Teleportation (3)

The character can move instantly to another place up to 10 meters per rank away. The character must see her destination clearly. In combat, this action takes an entire round. The character may take along whatever she can carry.

Transmutation (5)

The character can alter his substance to something else, while retaining his form (such as a man who turns to stone). Characters with this ability may only shift into one specific substance, which the player must specify when his character gets the Special Ability. Generally, this substance gives the character distinct advantages. The player may select up to 4 points (not ranks) in other Special Abilities that relate to the chosen form, per rank in this Special Ability. (Thus, two Transmutation ranks means 8 points in other Special Abilities.) *Natural Armor*, *Hardiness*, and *Environmental Resistance* are common ones.

Uncanny Aptitude (3)

This Special Ability is similar to the *Skill Bonus* Special Ability in that some sort of bizarre ability gives the character added bonuses to certain actions. However, instead of selecting a group of skills that the character gains a bonus to, the player and the Galaxy Master work out circumstances where these abilities come into play. For instance, a character might gain a +1 bonus to all *Agility*-related skill totals when in sunlight.

A character may have several variations of this ability, reflecting different bonuses. Each variation could have several ranks, with the bonuses adding to each other.

Ventriloquism (3)

The character can throw her voice up to three meters away per rank. No skill roll is required to do this, but if it is part of a trick attempt, she receives a +2D bonus per rank to *Con* and *Persuasion* rolls.

Water Breathing (2)

The character can breathe water and will not drown under water. She gains +1D per rank to all *Swim* rolls because she doesn't need to worry about drowning.

Youthful Appearance (1)

The character looks much younger than she actually is and receives a +1D per rank to *Persuasion* or *Con*. In general, characters should not look more than 10 to 20 years younger than they are, regardless of the number of ranks, though Galaxy Master discretion and common sense should rule here.

SPECIAL ABILITY ENHANCEMENTS

Enhancements allow Special Abilities to be somehow more than the typical version. Each Enhancement may be taken more than once for each Special Ability, either altering the ability in similar though distinct ways or, for some, through stacking the effects. The cost of the Enhancement adds to the associated Special Ability's total cost (base cost plus the cost for additional ranks).

Additional Effect (1): The Special Ability produces a useful, though minor, side effect that is a natural extension of the power. The more useful the side effect, the greater the number of ranks. Some examples include a skill bonus when using the ability, doing residual damage (such as reflection with *Natural Armor* or radiation with *Natural Ranged Weapon*), or adding functionality to an *Extra Body Part*.

Bestow (varies): The character may share her Special Ability with a certain type of target: sentient living, non-sentient living, or nonliving. The player must choose which group when including this Enhancement. The cost of this Enhancement equals one-half (rounded up) of the Special Ability total (base cost plus additional ranks cost plus Enhancement costs). She may use her Special Ability on herself and on members of her target group with a multi-action penalty. The character may give her Special Ability to one person per action.

Some Special Abilities will require better stories concerning how the character can manage sharing them than others (such as *Youthful Appearance* or *Ambidextrous*), while others may not have this Enhancement (such as *Longevity* or *Immortality*). The target has control over the use of the Bestowed Special Ability for as long as the Bestowing character allows. A character may only have one rank in this Enhancement, but she may have multiple versions of it.

Extended Range (3): The factor used to determine the range of the character's Special Ability is increased. Every rank of this Enhancement allows the player to add one half of the ranks in the Special Ability (rounded up) to the factor when determining the range. Thus, to increase the range factor by half the ranks costs three, by the ranks in the ability costs six, by 1.5 times the ranks costs eight, and so on.

Example: The range for *Natural Ranged Weapon* is 20 times the number of ranks in the Special Ability times the character's Strength or lift in meters. With two ranks of *Extended range*, the range would now be 20 times twice the number of ranks in the Special Ability times the character's Strength or lift.

Multiple Targets (2): The character may use the Special Ability more than once per round without incurring a multi-action penalty. For each rank in this Enhancement, the character gains one additional use of the Special Ability. This adds to any other bonus actions provided by a power; it does not multiply it.

SPECIAL ABILITY LIMITATIONS

These Limitations can be associated with Special Abilities, restricting their functionality and reducing their total cost (base cost plus the cost for additional ranks plus any Enhancements- not the per rank cost). For example, the total cost of two ranks of *Iron Will* in a game where Special Abilities are uncommon is four, and in a game where they are common, the cost is three.

Limitations may not lower a Special Ability's total cost below one, and all Limitations must have some sort of effect on play- just like Disadvantages. Each of a character's Special Abilities may have more than one of each Limitation, as they can either describe similar but distinct negative situations or, in some cases, stack the effects.

Ability Loss (3 for 1 rank; 4 for 2 ranks): The character temporarily loses his Special Ability at regular intervals or, when the Special Ability is used, he loses the ability to use a common skill in which he has experience (that is, additional pips or dice). Examples include: a character who cannot shapeshift when the sun is out; a character who cannot use his natural weapons on a particular day of the

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month or during a certain phase of the moon. The character is aware of what the circumstances are that will cause this. For an additional point and additional rank, the character must undergo some sort of (fairly simple) procedure to regain his ability or skill use. A Special Ability may have up to two ranks in a single variation of this Limitation, but a character may have it multiple times for different Special Abilities, circumstances, or combinations of Special Abilities and skills.

Allergy (3 for 1 rank; 4 for 2 ranks): The character has a somewhat minor allergy. Exposure to a fairly common substance (smoke, sunlight, particular food, etc.) causes the character to lose all Critical Success re-rolls until the condition is removed. For an additional point and additional rank, the effects are worse, and the character loses all actions due to coughing fits, watering eyes, or similar discomfort until she can get away from the allergen. A Special Ability may only have one rank in this Limitation, though it may have several different *Allergies*.

Burn-Out (1): See the Disadvantage by this name for suggestions that could also be applied to a Special Ability. The more likely the *Burn-Out*, the greater the number of ranks in this Limitation. A Special Ability may have multiple variations of this Limitation, representing different triggers for the *Burn-Out*.

Cybernetics (0): An artificial limb or organ provides the character's Special Ability. As a cybernetic improvement is impossible to accidentally drop or remove, this Limitation has no cost. Characters may have only one rank in it.

Debt (3): Someone (or, more likely, some entity) gave the character the Special Ability, along with certain obligations and restrictions. The character must continually beg the giver to retain the Special Ability, or she must perform certain tasks at the giver's request in exchange for continued use of the Special Ability. A Special Ability may only have one rank in this Limitation.

Flaw (1): All difficulties associated with using the Special Ability are increased by +2 per rank. The greater the rank associated with this Flaw, the greater the Difficulty modifier.

Minor Stigma (3): The character cannot use the Special Ability without performing the "proper rituals" before or after (someone with a natural weapon who must sketch an image of his intended victim before hunting him down; a shapeshifter who must be purified by his cult after killing someone). A Special Ability may only have one rank in this Limitation.

Others Only (2 for 1 rank; 3 for 2 ranks; 4 for 3 ranks): The character may not use the Special Ability himself; he may only allow others to use it. The value of this Limitation depends on how many groups of "others" he can use it on: For two points and one rank, the character may affect sentient living, non-sentient living, and nonliving targets. For three points and two ranks, the character can affect only two of the three groups. For four points and three ranks, the character can affect only one of the three groups. This Limitation may not be taken more than once per Special Ability. Additionally, like the *Bestow* Enhancement, some Special Abilities may require valid reasons before the Galaxy Master allows the Limitation's inclusion. Some abilities, such as *Immortality* and *Longevity*, may not have this Limitation. The target who gets the Special Ability has control over its use as if she actually had the ability, for as long as the giving character allows.

Allowing another person access to the Special Ability counts as an action for its owner, while using

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the new-found Special Ability counts as an action for the one who gets it (though gaining access to it does not). The Special Ability's owner may only give the Special Ability to one character per round, but the target may be different each round.

Price (1): The character must fulfill certain obligations in order to use the Special Ability. Perhaps when using *Water Breathing*, the character must remain in the water for at least 24 hours for every 24 hours out of it or suffer -4 modifier per rank in this Limitation to his damage resistance total for changing environments so quickly. Alternatively, there could be a Character or Fate Point fee of three Character Points per rank or one Fate Point per rank in the Limitation per adventure in which the character uses the Special Ability.

Restricted (1): The Special Ability is hindered in a way not covered by any other Limitation. The more restrictive the situation, the greater the number of ranks in this Limitation. For instance, a *Natural Weapon* (either kind) may only be useful against certain items. A Special Ability may have multiple variations of this Limitation, each representing a different restraint.

Side Effect (2): One of the character's Special Abilities has some sort of annoying side effect that appears with its use, such as constant whistling, a continuous glow, or a terrible stench. Add 4 per rank to the Difficulty of all *Sneak* attempts when the Special Ability is in use, as everyone can figure out she's coming. This will also affect interaction attempts, adding at least a +1 per rank to the Difficulty.

Singularity (1 per Special Ability): The character may use only one of a group of two or more Special Abilities each round. It does not take an action to switch Special Abilities. He may change the Special Ability in use at the beginning of his turn in a round, and he may rely on the chosen Special Ability until the next time he changes it. For a second rank (and one additional point per Special Ability), it does take an action to switch Special Abilities. A Special Ability may not have more than two ranks in this Limitation and all Special Abilities in the same group must have this Limitation at the same rank. Not all of a character's Special Abilities need be in the same Singularity group.

Super-Science (2): The Special Ability is contained in a piece of equipment – such as a gun, a staff, or a ring – developed through a technological means not readily available and certainly experimental. The item could be lent to another character or taken away with a successful grab and used by someone else, though at a +5 to the difficulty. On a Critical Failure, the item malfunctions and requires repair. Unless combined with the *Burn-Out* Limitation, a destroyed item may be recreated in a number of days equal to the total cost of the Special Ability (including all ranks, Enhancements, and Limitations). Characters who wish to have Special Abilities in their cybernetic implants may not take this Limitation, as cybernetic implants are impossible to remove without serious and extended effort. (See the *Cybernetics* Limitation, described herein.)

CHAPTER 4: ALIENS AND HUMAN OFFSHOOTS

WHAT'S IN THIS CHAPTER

Although it's possible to run a science-fiction adventure without aliens, it's not the norm for most eras of Astral Empires. This chapter offers you suggestions on how to design believable aliens set in the Astral Empires universe. You can also utilize these same ideas in order to create some of the many offshoots of Humanity that have developed over the thousands of years mankind has been in space, with the idea being that those mutated by the various environments encountered on colony worlds tend to be something not quite like their progenitors.

DESIGNING ALIENS AND HUMAN OFFSHOOTS

When it comes to game characteristics, aliens and Human offshoots are made the same way as a standard Human character. If the character options list doesn't give you any ideas, start either with the "Physical Appearance" or the "Society" sections. By the time you're done answering the questions in those, you'll have a better idea of how to form the package for a typical member of the species.

Physical Appearance

Jot down a few words or sentences for each of these categories. The more detailed you can be, the more vividly you can describe a member of the species to others. Additionally, having an idea of physical appearance can help you decide on the society. If you already have figured out the society, then that information can help you decide on an appearance appropriate for that type of people.

Height Range: You can either give a specific range in meters or be more vague (tall, short, medium, microscopic). Examples of tall beings in Astral Empires include J'Garans and other felinoids, along with light-worlder humans. Short creatures would include Nerfels, Zetans and Gremlins, with members of these races surviving into the 10,000 AD era.

Build and Weight Range: Build provides an accessible notion of a typical member's physique rather than merely giving a weight range. Most members of a species could be stocky, bulky, lumpy, skinny, well proportioned, or any of a number of descriptive words.

Heads: The head is typically considered the part of the body where the most number of sensory organs and the brain are located. Some species might have their sensory organs split among a few locations, with the brain in another part, giving them the illusion of having no head.

Sensory Organs: Beings rely on sensory organs to gather information about their environment. How many does the alien have, and what do they sense? How well is each sense developed? Humans have five senses, but your alien species may have additional, specialized organs to detect other aspects of their environment, such as barometric pressure changes or seismic activity. You also need

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to decide where the sensory organs are located.

Mouth: Consider the number of mouths, location of them, their size and shape, type of tongue, and teeth (if any). This often dictates the alien's dietary needs and rituals. A mouth might even be separate from the part used to create sounds.

Facial Features: On Humans, this includes eyes, ears, nose, and mouth. Alien species may have these located elsewhere. Decide what features are on your alien's face, and then specify number, location, size, shape, color, and other aspects of each.

Respiration: What does the species breathe, and how do they breathe it? Decide on the respiratory organ, which could be the same one used to eat (like a Human's mouth), gills, or an organ designed solely for the purpose of respiration.

Skeletal Structure: Decide whether aliens carry their soft flesh over a skeleton, under a skeleton, neither, or they've managed a little of both.

Movement: How does the alien get around? How many limbs does the alien require for locomotion? This is often dictated by where the species typically lives. In heavy-gravity environments, creatures tend to be closer to the ground, while water-dwellers develop fins and webbing to help them move through their environment.

Limbs: Consider type, number, length, and what purpose they have. Some aliens might have developed a separate limb or tentacle for eating, holding, and fighting.

Manipulators: Determine how the species manipulates objects. If the species has hands, how many fingers? They could also use pincers, tentacles, or telekinesis.

Tail: Some species have a tail for balance. If that's the case, how long is a typical one? Is it tipped with any natural weaponry? Can it be used like an additional arm?

Skin: Is the skin scaly, smooth, slimy, hairy, or something else? What color is it? Does it have any markings on it? Does it ooze anything?

Body Temperature: Some species can regulate their own body temperature, as do Humans and birds. The body of others could be more influenced by changes in the environment, like reptiles and fish. Having some control of body temperature, as well as the preferred temperature, can influence the kind of clothes and preferred climactic conditions.

Decorative Features: Decorative features include horns, hair, bone protrusions, cartilage bumps or ridges, skin flaps, frills, feathers, and other aspects that may not do more than be attractive to potential mates.

Society

Establishing significant features of the alien species' society gives them more depth by placing them in a larger context. This information can also help you decide on the physical appearance. Should you have already decided upon that, take into consideration what features you've given your alien so you can create a society that makes sense for that combination of physical characteristics.

Community and Family: How does the species raise children? Consider whether the groups formed are based on age, sex, life stage, relation, or something else. Decide how large the groups can get, and

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what happens if the group gets "too big." If there isn't much overlap between groups, describe why.

Conflicts: Does the species have particular rituals that it performs in order to solve conflicts? Do different groups have alternate ways of resolving conflicts? Are there any penalties for not following the rules?

Government: The kind of governments that develop generally stem from the types of groups that are formed and how each resolves conflicts. A highly segregated society with many rituals might consider it natural to follow a military dictatorship, while one with loosely formed groups and a discussion-based resolution system might have a democracy.

Social Graces: Every society has many customs that each member takes for granted. Coming up with a few of these- which could include traditional means of performing actions, ritual greetings, table etiquette, or anything else that can be formalized - gives the society a distinctive flavor, as well as providing the opportunity for conflict among species who meet for the first time.

Playtime: Playing is a way of learning about one's environment and other people in one's social group, even if that's not the most obvious result. Think about what kinds of games are played: intellectual, physical, or emotional? Are they played as a way of learning how to get along, or are they another means of showing off power?

Science, Art, and Religion: Decide whether the species considers any of these more or less important than the others. Describe a few key aspects- how prevalent the technology is, whether art is limited to a single group, the number of religions present --that demonstrate the capabilities of the species in each area.

EXAMPLES AND PACKAGES

These sets of Advantages, Disadvantages, and Special Abilities define the physical and mental characteristics of stereotypical members of common science-fiction species, as well as offer an idea of how to represent your own aliens and alien packages. Realize that, to keep the point total down, not every characteristics of each kind of alien was represented through Advantages, Disadvantages, and Special Abilities. Instead, the most significant features were chosen. Galaxy Master (GM)s should customize these basic characters to fit their idea of each species more closely.

Players may overlay the packages on any other character template. Disadvantages received from these packages do not count toward the maximum number of Disadvantages set by the Galaxy Master (GM). Body Points for typical characters were added to a Galaxy Master (GM)'s character base of 10.

All species listed here are about two meters tall on average, and have roughly the same weight range as Humans. Player's characters designed using the packages should follow the normal character creation guidelines with respect to Fate Points, Character Points, Body Points, Wounds, languages, and any other feature not listed in the package.

The total creation point cost refers to the number of points from the creation point pool that the player must spend to include that package with her character. The total defined limit cost indicates the number of skill and attribute dice the player must deduct from the total number of dice she may spend when creating her character.

Felinoid (Cat People such as J'Garans, T'Garans and L'Narans)

Typical

Agility 4D: Acrobatics 4D+2; Brawling 4D+1; Dodge 4D+1; Firearms 4D+1
Strength 2D: Climb/jump 2D+2
Knowledge 3D: Astrography 3D+1; Bureaucracy 3D+1; Intimidation 3D+1; Willpower 3D+1
Perception 4D: Search 4D+1; Sneak 4D+1
Mechanical 2D: Piloting 2D+1; Sensors 2D+2
Technical 2D: Flight Systems Repair 2D+1; medicine 2D+1

Move: 10
Strength Damage: 1D
Fate Points: 0
Character Points: 2
Body Points: 16
Wound Levels: 3

Package

Total creation point cost: 3

Total defined limit cost: 3 skill dice

Advantages: None

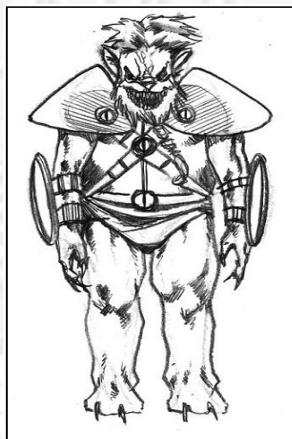
Disadvantages: *Hindrance: Arrogance (R2), +3 to Con and Persuasion difficulties; Hindrance: Reduced Hardiness (R2), -2 to damage resistance totals; Quirk: Hates Water (R2), make a difficult Willpower roll to be wet or will do nothing until dry*

Special Abilities: *Enhanced Sense: Sight (R1, cost 3), +1 to sight-based skill totals; Enhanced Sense: Hearing (R1, cost 3), +2 to hearing-based skill totals; Extra Body Part: Tail (R1, cost 0); Skill Bonus: Agility (R1, cost 1), +1 to Acrobatics, Climb/Jump, and Running totals; Natural Hand-to-Hand Weapon: Claws (R1, cost 2), +1D damage*

Advantages: None

Disadvantages: *Hindrance: Arrogance (R2), +3 to Con and Persuasion difficulties; Hindrance: Reduced Hardiness (R2), -2 to damage resistance totals; Quirk: Hates Water (R2), make a difficult Willpower roll to be wet or will do nothing until dry*

Special Abilities: *Enhanced Sense: Sight (R1, cost 3), +1 to sight-based skill totals; Enhanced Sense: Hearing (R1, cost 3), +2 to hearing-based skill totals; Extra Body Part: Tail (R1, cost 0); Skill Bonus: Agility (R1, cost 1), +1 to Acrobatics, Climb/Jump, and Running totals; Natural Hand-to-Hand Weapon: Claws (R1, cost 2), +1D damage*



Heavy Worlder (Human Offshoots such as the Albarons)

Typical

Agility 2D: Brawling 3D; Firearms 3D
Strength 4D: Lift 4D+1; Stamina 4D+1
Knowledge 3D+1: Astrography 3D+2;
Intimidation 3D+2; *Tactics* 3D+2
Perception 3D+2: *Command* 4D; *Investigation* 4D; *Search* 4D
Mechanical 3D: *Gunnery* 3D+1; *Piloting* 3D+1;
Sensors 3D+1; *Shields* 3D+1
Technical 3D

Move: 10

Strength Damage: 2D

Fate Points: 0

Character Points: 2

Body Points: 21

Wound Levels: 3

Package

Total creation point cost: 1

Total defined limit cost: 1 skill die

Advantages: None

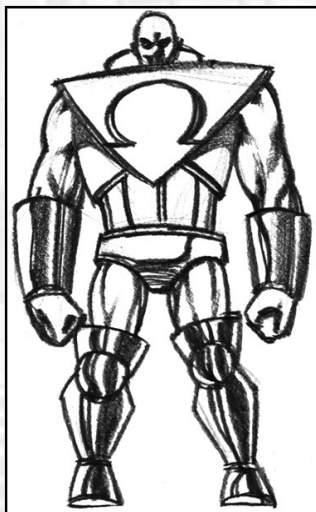
Advantages: None

Disadvantages: *Achilles' Heel*: *Low Gravity* (R3), +1 to all *Agility* difficulties in a gravities of 1 g or less

Disadvantages: *Achilles' Heel*: *Low Gravity* (R3), +1 to all *Agility* difficulties in a gravities of 1 g or less

Special Abilities: *Hardiness* (R4, cost 4), +4 to damage resistance totals

Special Abilities: *Hardiness* (R4, cost 4), +4 to damage resistance totals



Insectoid (Insect People such as the Qajari Bryx and Laythians)

Typical

Agility 3D+1: Brawling 4D; Melee Combat 4D; Running 3D+2
Strength 3D+2: Climb/Jump 4D; Lift 4D+1;
Stamina 4D
Knowledge 3D: Astrography 3D+1;
Intimidation 4D; **Tactics** 3D+2
Perception 3D+2: Search 4D
Mechanical 2D+1: Gunnery 3D; Navigation 2D+2; Piloting 2D+2; Sensors 2D+2
Technical 2D

Advantages: None

Disadvantages: *Devotion (R3)*, dedicated to hive and will support it above all else; *Hindrance: Swimming (R2)*, +8 to Swim difficulties

Special Abilities: *Natural Armor: Chitin (R1, cost 3)*, +1D to damage resistance total against physical damage; *Natural Hand-to-Hand Weapon: Claws (R1, cost 2)*, +1D damage

Move: 10

Strength Damage: 2D

Fate Points: 0

Character Points: 2

Body Points: 20

Wound levels: 3

Package

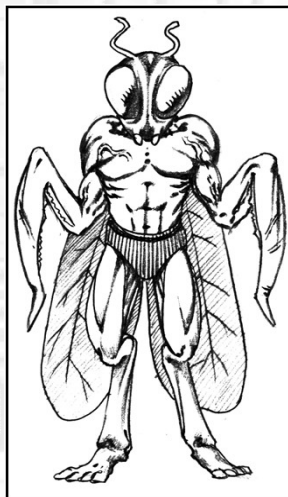
Total creation point cost: 0

Total defined limit cost: 0

Advantages: None

Disadvantages: *Devotion (R3)*, dedicated to hive and will support it above all else; *Hindrance: Swimming (R2)*, +8 to Swim difficulties

Special Abilities: *Natural Armor: Chitin (R1, cost 3)*, +1D to damage resistance total against physical damage; *Natural Hand-to-Hand Weapon: Claws (R1, cost 2)*, +1D damage



Reptiloid (Reptile People such as Zarlacks, Sarlicons and the Draconis Rex)

Typical

Agility 3D+2: Brawling 4D+1; Dodge 4D;
Firearms 4D; Melee Weapons 4D; Running 4D
Strength 4D: Lift 4D+1; Stamina 4D+1
Knowledge 3D: Bureaucracy 3D+1; Tactics
3D+2
Perception 3D+1: Bargain 3D+2; Command
3D+2; Con 3D+2
Mechanical 2D: Gunnery 2D+2; Piloting 2D+1;
Vehicle Operation 2D+1
Technical 2D: Flight Systems Repair 2D+1;
Security 2D+1; Vehicle Repair 2D+1

Advantages: None

Disadvantages: Hindrance: Arrogance (R2), +3 to Con
and Persuasion difficulties; Achilles' Heel:
Environmental Incompatibility (R3), +1 modifier to
difficulties per round exposed to temperatures
below 15° C

Special Abilities: Extra Body Part: Tail (R1, cost 0);
Natural Armor: Skin (R1, cost 3), +1D to damage
resistance total; Natural Hand-to-Hand Weapon: Claws

(R1, cost 2), +1D damage

Fate Points: 0

Character Points: 2

Body Points: 22

Wound levels: 3

Package

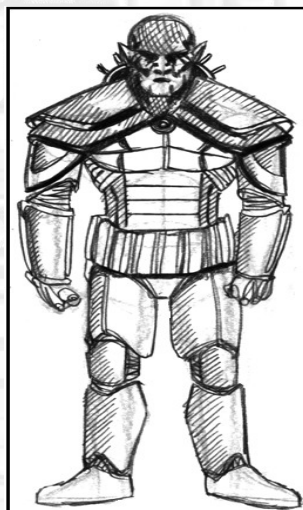
Total creation point cost: 0

Total defined limit cost: 0

Advantages: None

Disadvantages: Hindrance: Arrogance (R2), +3 to Con
and Persuasion difficulties; Achilles' Heel:
Environmental Incompatibility (R3), +1 modifier to
difficulties per round exposed to temperatures
below 15° C

Special Abilities: Extra Body Part: Tail (R1, cost 0);
Natural Armor: Skin (R1, cost 3), +1D to damage
resistance total; Natural Hand-to-Hand Weapon: Claws
(R1, cost 2), +1D damage



CHAPTER 5: CYBERNETICS

What's in this Chapter

Cybernetic enhancements are widely available in the average space opera universe, both from legitimate dealers and from street surgeons. This section presents basic details on how to customize some of the more popular varieties, as well as a sampling of typically available cyberware. It should be noted that in the Astral Empires universe cybernetics tends to come and go, being quite common in some eras (such as *Astral Empires: Tech Noir AD 02020-02050*) and a fairly marginalized practice in other eras. In the core AD 10,000 time period that is the focus of this book, Cybernetics are mostly restricted to the Gladiatorial Axis and especially their Gladiator Cybrids. They are included here to allow maximum flexibility to players.

Character Options and Cybernetic Implants

Cybernetic implants can serve as a handy excuse for having certain Special Abilities and Disadvantages. These represent, in a convenient fashion, how each piece of equipment works (or doesn't). In fact, when the player includes a Special Ability in his character's cybernetic unit, he must also explain how that Special Ability manifests itself, whether it be through a gun that pops up, a drug that is released into the system, or a tool that's revealed from a fingertip. Naturally, the Galaxy Master (GM) has the right to request that the player alter his choice if the addition is unreasonable (such a high-powered machine gun installed in a toe). Galaxy Master (GM)s may even reduce the number of upgrade slots available in each implant to reflect a (relatively) lower-tech setting.

There is no additional cost to include a Special Ability in cybernetic implants, beyond the normal charge for gaining that Special Ability. Special Abilities in cybernetic implants can have Enhancements and Limitations as per the rules in the "Character Options" chapter. Galaxy Master (GM)s may require Special Abilities such as Skill Bonus to be restricted to specializations of the boosted skill that reflect what a character could do with just the limb or organ in question.

Likewise, the cybernetic implants can exist as the focus for certain Disadvantages, including *Price*, *Debt*, and *Quirk*.

Getting Cybernetic Implants at Character Creation

When designing a character, the player chooses the type of cybernetic implants she wants her character have. This should be limited to one full limb or a few organs, unless the character also has the Equipment Advantage. (A higher rank in Equipment means more cybernetic implants.) The player then selects (and pays the cost for) any Special Abilities and Disadvantages she wants associated with the cybernetic implants. Certain Advantages are also appropriate for cybernetic implants, including *Fame*, *Trademark Specialization*, or a high-ranking *Contact* or any rank of *Patron* (either of which could have arranged for the character to gain the cyberware).

The character need not go through the surgery process or pay the monetary purchase cost.

After Character Creation

After character creation, the character needs not only money (and Character Points) but time for surgery. The character pays the cybernetic implant cost with Funds or credits, including the cost of adding any Special Abilities, and goes through the surgery installation process (see the next section). Characters may lower the cost and the surgery Difficulty by taking Disadvantages. Instead of getting bonus Character Points for opting for more restrictions, Disadvantages lower the surgery and price Difficulty each by 3 times the rank in the Disadvantage, with a minimum Difficulty of 10. If using credits, reduce the cost by 10% per rank, with a minimum cost of 10,000 credits.

The player also needs to pay the Character Point cost of the Special Ability plus a number of Character Points equal to the base surgery cost of the implant.

Installation Surgery

Fitting the body with cybernetic implants involves surgery and can be an extremely painful process. A successful medicine skill check is required to install cybernetic implants in this manner. If the cybernetic implant has been "stripped" (taken off of another host) or has not been customized, skill totals in personal equipment repair also are required.

The Difficulty of the cyber surgery varies according to the system involved. Surgery Difficulty and the damage done to the person as a result of a successful installation are listed with the equipment characteristics at the end of this chapter.

Characters are always unconscious for 30 minutes after undergoing surgery, and are likely to be injured. This damage is healed at the same rate as normal wounds. Additionally, Character or Fate Points may not be spent to improve the cyber-character's natural healing abilities or the skills of herself or others when trying to recover from wounds incurred during cyber surgery.

The results of cyber surgery are determined by the level of success of the medicine check (the difference between the skill total and the Difficulty). Use the following guidelines:

Failure (skill total did not meet or beat Difficulty): The cyber system is not installed. Worse, the surgeon has botched the job. The patient takes more damage than he normally would have—increase the damage to Incapacitated or 75% of the character's base Body Points.

Minimal (skill total equals Difficulty): System is installed, but just barely. Damage is Severely Wounded or 50% of the character's base Body Points, and the system malfunctions on a 1 or 2 on the Wild Die.

Average (skill total beats Difficulty by 1--5 points): The system is installed, but malfunctions on a Critical Failure. The character incurs normal damage (Severely Wounded or 50% of the character's base Body Points).

Good (skill total beats Difficulty by 6--9 points): Installation is successful. The character incurs normal damage (Severely Wounded or 50% of the character's base Body Points).

Superior (skill total beats Difficulty by 10 or more points): Installation is successful and the amount of time needed to recover from surgery damage is halved. The character incurs normal damage (Severely Wounded or 50% of the character's base Body Points).

When using stripped cybergear, make two separate skill totals--one medicine and one personal

equipment repair at the same Difficulty. One failure is enough to botch the surgery entirely. In any other instance, add together the amounts by which each skill beat the Difficulty. Divide this total by 2, and compare the new number to the levels above to determine the effect on the character.

Upgrading Existing Cybernetic Implants

Once a character has a cybernetic implant installed, he may upgrade it as long as he has upgrade slots left in the unit. Even then, by swapping out one upgrade for another, the character can put something new in.

To add an upgrade to an empty slot requires a single personal equipment repair roll at the Difficulty. To swap out an existing upgrade needs a personal equipment repair roll for the removal and one for the installation. In both instances, the character pays the cost of adding a Special Ability, but does not pay any additional fee.

In most cases, the Galaxy Master (GM) should rule that improving an existing upgrade (such as adding an additional rank to a *Natural Weapons* Special Ability) demands a swapping-out procedure. A few, such as adding ranks to low levels of the *Skill Bonus* Special Ability, may only call for the installation of a new firmware, which can be done with a computer interface/repair attempt. Whether it's a swapping or firmware procedure, the character only pays for the additional ranks, not for the total number of ranks. (Unless, of course, the character wants to keep the old upgrade as a spare; then the character would need to pay for the entire cost.)

Note that if the character wants to go from a small part of a larger unit to a larger unit (such as a hand to an arm), she must purchase a whole new implant and go through the procedure as if she were getting a new part (see the "After Character Creation" part of the "Getting Cybernetic Implants" section earlier in this chapter). Hopefully, the shop where she's getting the new parts from will buy her old cybernetic implants from her.

Determining the Installation Difficulty

Every type of cybernetic implant has a base surgery Difficulty, which indicates how challenging it is to install a standard, no-frills unit. Of course, few characters will want to go through the trouble just to have a fake limb that works exactly the same as the original. Characters may choose to upgrade their cybernetic implants by taking Special Abilities, which represent a program or additional piece of equipment added to unit. To figure out how difficult it is to install an upgraded unit, the player determines the creation point cost of the Special Ability, including any additional ranks and any Enhancements and Limitations and their ranks. (The player determines the creation point cost of the Special Ability, regardless of whether it's during or after character creation.) Then the player subtracts from that number any Disadvantages she wishes her character to gain by having the cybernetic implant. Finally, once everything is approved by the Galaxy Master (GM) (that is, the Galaxy Master (GM) decides whether that model is currently available), the player adds that number to the base surgery Difficulty to figure out the installation Difficulty of the item.

Use this number regardless of whether the character is getting a new implant or upgrading an existing one.

Determining the Cost

The price Difficulty for a new cybernetic implant equals the installation Difficulty, modified as the Galaxy Master (GM) deems necessary based on the circumstances of the installation. In credits, the cyberware costs 1,000 times the installation Difficulty. Again, the Galaxy Master (GM) may alter this based on the situation.

For upgrading an existing unit, subtract 10 from the installation Difficulty to get the upgrade price Difficulty. In credits, the upgrade costs 100 times this price Difficulty. Either number may be modified as the Galaxy Master (GM) sees fit.

Installation Example

A Galaxy Master (GM) might have available the Equilibria cyber-ear. Fitted in place of the inner ear, the Equilibria improves balance. This is an ear unit with one upgrade, *Skill Bonus: Balance (R3)*, +3 to *Brawling: Block, Melee Combat: Parry/Block, Acrobatics: Beam Walking, Dodge, and Riding* totals. The Galaxy Master (GM) decides that a low-grade Equilibria has the Limitation *Allergy: Loud Sounds (R1)*, character loses all Critical Success rerolls when exposed very loud sounds (like hammering). The total point cost for the Special Ability is 1 (3 for the Special Ability and its ranks minus 3 for the Limitation, with a minimum cost of 1). The base surgery difficulty is 17 for an ear. With the upgrade, the installation difficulty becomes 18. The price difficulty is 18, while the credits cost is 18,000.

Cyberpsychosis

Cyberpsychosis is a state of mind some "chipheads" and "cynchware chocks" achieve after too much cyber-strain has been placed on their nervous systems and cranial functions. "Cyber-psyches" are people who have gone too deep into the slicksteel universe and have truly become "one" with their cyberware.

Cyberpsychosis is like any other psychosis. The character becomes caught up in a world detached from reality. Cyberware, chiplife, and "jacking in and tuning out" have become the most important thing to this person. Organic flesh (and the needs of that flesh) are only distractions along the pure slicksteel path. A character with cyber-psychosis cannot relate well with the organic world but is intimately familiar with the non-organic. Cyber-psyches seek to replace their organicness with the "new-and-improved" cybernetics available to them. Then, they seek to upgrade themselves by getting more powerful and better attachments. It is a never-ending cycle, an addiction that feeds on itself.

Cyberpsychosis can be roleplayed by players' characters and game-master characters alike (and represented through the Hindrance or Quirk Disadvantages). It is recommended that the Galaxy Master (GM) (and the players, if a player's character is involved) work out the severity and details of this psychosis, so that it can be effectively roleplayed. It should be a roleplaying choice as well- it is very hard to play a psychosis effectively or realistically, and the person playing the cyberpsychotic character should decide if she is up to the challenge.

Types of Cybernetic Implants

Characters can just about any body part replaced, except the brain, which can only be enhanced. The basic units provide no more functionality than the part a character came with, nor are they any

sturdier than organic pieces. However, unlike natural body parts, they readily serve as a reason to gain new Special Abilities (and Disadvantages).

All units are assumed to come with nearly limitless energy sources that have no harmful side effects. All units are controlled by mental commands, in the same way that a person can control her limbs by thinking about it. The wiring can't be shorted. The unit's covering matches the texture and appearance of the character's normal skin and fits virtually seamlessly with the rest of the character's body. Disadvantages and Limitations can lower the cost of the unit at a risk or inconvenience to the character (such as having to recharge the power cell or being susceptible to electricity-based attacks).

The description of each unit includes the number of upgrade slots for that part. Once the upgrade slots are maxed out, the character must replace one of the older upgrades to get a new feature.

Extra Cybernetic Parts

Characters may include certain additional pieces on themselves. Such cybernetic equipment includes shoulder, complete leg, tail, tentacle, eye, ear, nose, heart, scholarship reader, neural jack, and drug dispenser. The character automatically gains the *Extra Body Part* Special Ability. Except for the scholarship reader, neural jack, and drug dispenser, each additional unit adds 10 to the surgery difficulty. Furthermore, the character is disoriented for a few days after recovering from the surgery (+5 to all difficulties), as she adjusts to having the new body part.

Upper Body

Hand, Arm, and Shoulder Restrictions

These restrictions apply to all hand, arm, and shoulder cybernetic implants.

Skill Bonus, *Skill Minimum*, and *Uncanny Aptitude* may only be taken for skills the hand can use. Unless the character replaces both legs, the *Fast Reactions* ability only applies to skills that can be used with one hand.

Ambidextrous may only be taken if both hands are replaced at the same time, though the Special Ability need only be purchased once per pair of hands. However, the Special Ability takes up one slot in each hand.

For items requiring one hand to lift, the character receives the full bonus. For items requiring two hands to lift, the character gets one-half of the bonus (rounded up), unless he has both hands replaced. If the bonuses given by the hands are different, then the character gets the average of the bonuses (rounded up) when attempting two-handed maneuvers.

Hand

This unit replaces the whole hand, including the wrist, palm, and digits.

Upgrade Slots: One upgrade slot per digit plus one in the palm or wrist. Thus, a Human would have six upgrade slots in a basic hand unit.

Special Abilities Allowed: *Ambidextrous*; *Armor-Defeating Attack*; *Enhanced Sense: Touch*; *Extra Sense* (any tactile type); *Fast Reactions* with *Limitation Restricted (R)*, may only be used with hand-using skills; *Natural*

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Hand-to-Hand Weapon; Natural Ranged Weapon; Skill Bonus; Skill Minimum; Uncanny Aptitude.

Notes: The maximum bonus to *Climb/Jump, Lift, and Swim* equals the number in front of the "D" of the character's current *Strength* die code. For additional restrictions, see the sidebar.

Base Surgery Difficulty: 10

Arm

This unit replaces the hand, forearm, elbow, and upper arm.

Upgrade Slots: One upgrade slot per digit, one in the palm or wrist, one in the forearm, and one in the rear arm.

Special Abilities Allowed: *Ambidextrous; Armor-Defeating Attack; Enhanced Sense: Touch; Extra Sense* (any tactile type); *Fast Reactions* with *Limitation Restricted (R)*, may only be used with hand-using skills; *Natural Hand-to-Hand Weapon; Natural Ranged Weapon; Skill Bonus; Skill Minimum; Uncanny Aptitude.*

Notes: The maximum bonus to *Climb/Jump, Lift, and Swim* is 3 times the number in front of the "D" of the character's current *Strength* die code. For additional restrictions, see the sidebar.

Base Surgery Difficulty: 12

Shoulder

This unit replaces the hand, forearm, elbow, upper arm, and shoulder.

Upgrade Slots: It has the same number of upgrade slots as the arm unit.

Special Abilities Allowed: *Ambidextrous; Armor-Defeating Attack; Enhanced Sense: Touch; Extra Sense* (any tactile type); *Fast Reactions* with *Limitation Restricted (R)*, may only be used with hand-using skills; *Natural Hand-to-Hand Weapon; Natural Ranged Weapon; Skill Bonus; Skill Minimum; Uncanny Aptitude.*

Notes: There is no maximum *Climb/ Jump, Lift, and Swim* bonus. For additional restrictions, see the sidebar.

Base Surgery Difficulty: 15

Lower Body

Foot, Lower Leg, and Leg Restrictions

These restrictions apply to all foot, lower leg, and complete leg cybernetic implants.

Skill Bonus, Skill Minimum, and Uncanny Aptitude may only be taken for skills the foot can use. Unless the character replaces both legs, the *Fast Reactions* ability only applies to skills that can be used with one foot.

Characters gain only half the bonus (rounded up) to *Climb/Jump, Running, or Swim* attempts and half of the *Hypermovement* adjustment unless the character has both feet replaced.

If the bonuses given by the feet are different, than the character gets the average of the bonuses (rounded up) when attempting these maneuvers.

Foot

This unit replaces the foot and ankle.

Upgrade Slots: It generally has one non-weapon upgrade slot and one weapon upgrade slot, though Galaxy Master (GM)s may allow certain species to include additional slots (at an increased cost, of course).

Special Abilities Allowed: *Armor-Defeating Attack; Fast Reactions* with Limitation *Restricted (R)*, may only be used with foot-using skills; *Natural Hand-to-Hand Weapon; Natural Ranged Weapon; Skill Bonus; Skill Minimum; Uncanny Aptitude.*

Notes: The maximum bonus to *Climb/Jump, Running, or Swim* equals the number in front of the "D" of the character's current *Strength* die code. For additional restrictions, see the sidebar.

Base Surgery Difficulty: 10

Lower Leg

This unit replaces the foot, ankle, lower leg, and knee.

Upgrade Slots: It has one upgrade slot for the leg plus the same number of upgrade slots as the foot (generally one non-weapon and one weapon).

Special Abilities Allowed: *Armor-Defeating Attack; Fast Reactions* with Limitation *Restricted (R)*, may only be used with foot-using skills; *Natural Hand-to-Hand Weapon; Natural Ranged Weapon; Skill Bonus; Skill Minimum; Uncanny Aptitude.*

Notes: The maximum bonus to *Climb/Jump, Running, or Swim* is 3 times the number in front of the "D" of the character's current *Strength* die code. For additional restrictions, see the sidebar.

Base Surgery Difficulty: 12

Complete Leg

This unit replaces the entire leg, from foot to thigh.

Upgrade Slots: It has one upgrade slot for the lower leg, one upgrade slot for the upper leg, and the same number of upgrade slots as the foot (typically one non-weapon and one weapon).

Special Abilities Allowed: *Armor-Defeating Attack; Fast Reactions* with Limitation *Restricted (R)*, may only be used with foot-using skills; *Hypermovement; Natural Hand-to-Hand Weapon; Natural Ranged Weapon; Skill Bonus; Skill Minimum; Uncanny Aptitude.*

Notes: There is no maximum *Climb/Jump, Running, or Swim* bonus. For additional restrictions, see the sidebar.

Base Surgery Difficulty: 15

Head

Ear

One ear unit replaces one auditory receptor.

Upgrade Slots: Two upgrade slots

Special Abilities Allowed: *Enhanced Sense: Hearing; Extra Sense (auditory type); Skill Bonus; Skill Minimum; Uncanny Aptitude.*

Notes: *Skill Bonus, Skill Minimum, and Uncanny Aptitude* are restricted to hearing-based or balance-related specializations. Cannot be fitted with weapons.

Base Surgery Difficulty: 17

Eye

One eye unit replaces one visual receptor.

Upgrade Slots: Two upgrade slots, but see restriction.

Special Abilities Allowed: *Enhanced Sense: Sight; Extra Sense (visual type); Infravision/Ultravision; Natural Ranged Weapon; Skill Bonus; Skill Maximum; Uncanny Aptitude.*

Notes: A weapon upgrade would take up both slots. *Skill Bonus, Skill Maximum, and Uncanny Aptitude* are restricted to sight-based specializations.

Base Surgery Difficulty: 17

Mouth

This unit replaces the jaw or chewing organ of the character. If the whole mouth is replaced, it can withstand the force of a cyberthroat's blast.

Upgrade Slots: The only upgrade a jaw can get is additional damage through Natural Hand-to-Hand Weapon: Teeth. By replacing the tongue, the character may also gain one non-weapon upgrade slot and one weapon upgrade unit.

Special Abilities Allowed: *Enhanced Sense: Taste; Extra Body Part: Tentacle-Tongue; Extra Sense (any tasting or tactile type); Skill Bonus; Natural Hand-to-Hand Weapon: Teeth; Natural Hand-to-Hand Weapon: Tentacle-Tongue; Natural Ranged Weapon; Skill Maximum; Uncanny Aptitude.*

Notes: *Skill Bonus, Skill Maximum, and Uncanny Aptitude* are restricted to taste-based specializations. The tongue can be fitted with a weapon on a tentacle.

Base Surgery Difficulty: 15

Nose

This unit replaces the olfactory organ.

Upgrade Slots: One upgrade slot.

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Special Abilities Allowed: *Enhanced Sense: Smell; Extra Sense (any olfactory type); Skill Bonus; Skill Maximum; Uncanny Aptitude.*

Notes: *Skill Bonus, Skill Maximum, and Uncanny Aptitude* are restricted to scent-based specializations. Cannot be fitted with weapons.

Base Surgery Difficulty: 17

Scholarchip Reader

The reader unit is implanted in the brain, with a slot for scholarchips accessible on the surface. Scholarchips allow characters to gain skills or bonuses to skills without have to go through the tedious task of learning them. Of course, a character may not rely on any skill bonus from a scholarchip that is not installed, even if he used that chip in the past.

Upgrade Slots: One slot in reader (takes one scholarchip).

Special Abilities Allowed: *Combat Sense; Iron Will; Master of Disguise; Skill Bonus; Skill Minimum.*

Notes: Special Abilities may be incorporated into scholarchips only.

Base Surgery Difficulty: 20

Throat

This unit replaces the throat and vocal apparatus, if located in the throat.

Upgrade Slots: Two non-weapon slots and one weapon slot.

Special Abilities Allowed: *Multiple Abilities: Synthetic Voice, +2 to Languages attempts when speaking, +1 Con bonus, and +1 Persuasion bonus; Natural Ranged Weapon: Scream; Natural Ranged Weapon: Chemical Blast; Natural Ranged Weapon: Energy Blast; Ventriloquism.*

Notes: *Natural Ranged Weapon: Chemical Blast* and *Natural Ranged Weapon: Energy Blast* require the character have a cybernetic mouth or a Special Ability that will allow her to heal rapidly the damage to her mouth because of her own blast.

Base Surgery Difficulty: 15

Organs

Heart

This unit replaces the primary circulatory organ.

Upgrade Slots: Two slots.

Special Abilities Allowed: *Endurance; Immunity.*

Notes: None.

Base Surgery Difficulty: 20

Digestive System

This unit replaces the digestive system.

Upgrade Slots: Two slots.

Special Abilities Allowed: Immunity, Omnivorous.

Notes: None.

Base Surgery Difficulty: 20

Lungs

This unit replaces the respiratory organs.

Upgrade Slots: Four slots.

Special Abilities Allowed: Endurance, Atmospheric Tolerance, Water Breathing, Natural Ranged Weapon: Breath (with Limitation Restricted (R2), damage used as Strength to determine knockdown only).

Notes: None.

Base Surgery Difficulty: 20

Other Parts

Dermal Plate

Dermal plate replaces the character's skin. While the character gains protection from the new layers, the character can no longer feel with that part of her body unless she has a Special Ability installed in a cybernetic replacement for that part of the body. Dermal plate may be layered over cybernetic limbs.

Upgrade Slots: Two slots.

Special Abilities Allowed: Attack Resistance, Environmental Resistance, Hardiness, Natural Armor.

Notes: Environmental Resistance may only be taken with full-body dermal armor.

Base Surgery Difficulty: 10 per body part (limb, tail, tentacle, torso, and head)

Drug Dispenser

The drug dispenser allows a convenient and sanitary method for injecting any one of a number of legal and illegal physical- or mental-enhancing substances into the body.

Upgrade Slots: One slot.

Special Abilities Allowed: Accelerated Healing, Animal Control, Atmospheric Tolerance, Attack Resistance, Blur, Combat Sense, Confusion, Endurance, Enhanced Sense, Environmental Resistance, Fast Reactions, Fear, Quick Study, Hardiness, Hypermovement, Immunity, Increased Attribute, Infravision/Ultravision, Invisibility, Iron Will, Omnivorous, Paralyzing Touch, Sense of Direction, Silence, Skill Bonus, Skill Minimum, Uncanny Aptitude, Ventriloquism, Water Breathing, Youthful Appearance.

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Notes: All Special Abilities must have the Limitation *Burn-Out (R1)*, disappears after one hour. Additional ranks of *Burn-Out* can be added; one additional rank equals five less minutes of time. Galaxy Master (GM)s may allow characters to pay only the price and not the Character Point cost for a one-time use of a drug. Likewise, characters who wish to permanently rely on the drugs to get their Special Abilities should instead take the Limitation *Price (R2)*, must recharge drug dispenser with a new dose after one hour.

Base Surgery Difficulty: 10 (when installed alone in flesh); 5 (when installed in a cybernetic upgrade slot)

Neural Jack

This device resembles a socket, used for interface with cyberdecks and computers with matching ports. A cable connects the user's jack with the machine, allowing for easy access. Generally, neural jacks are installed on the neck or behind the ear, but since the character receives the bonus only once per jack, some characters add jacks to other parts of the body.

Upgrade Slots: One slot.

Special Abilities Allowed: *Skill Bonus: Computer Interface/Repair.*

Notes: A character may use the neural jack to improve her ability to work on the computer. With a computer that allows her access automatically (such as a ship she's authorized to be on), she may add her neural jack bonus to any one bonus that the computer provides. A neural jack with no upgrade merely allows a character to interface with a computer that has a neural port and no other means of input.

Base Surgery Difficulty: 20

Syntheskin

Syntheskin is a manufactured covering that looks and feels like natural skin (or scales or whatever the species in question has). It provides no protection and comes by default with all limbs and dermal armor. Characters who took a Disadvantage that eliminated the syntheskin from the base package must purchase it separately when they get rid of that Disadvantage.

Upgrade Slots: Not applicable.

Special Abilities Allowed: Not applicable.

Notes: None.

Base Surgery Difficulty: 3

Tail/Tentacle

This unit replaces or adds a tail or tentacle.

Upgrade Slots: One non-weapon upgrade slot and one weapon upgrade slot.

Special Abilities Allowed: *Ambidextrous; Armor-Defeating Attack; Enhanced Sense: Touch; Extra Sense (any tactile type); Natural Hand-to-Hand Weapon; Natural Ranged Weapon; Skill Bonus; Skill Minimum; Uncanny Aptitude.*

Notes: *Skill Bonus*, *Skill Minimum*, and *Uncanny Aptitude* may only be taken for skills the tail or tentacle can use. Base Surgery Difficulty: 10

Examples

AdrenoCharger Dispenser

A small injector fitted into a cybernetic implant or onto the adrenal glands, the AdrenoCharger shoots adrenaline directly into the bloodstream.

Increased Attribute: Strength (R4), +4 to Strength-related skill, and *Increased Attribute: Agility (R4)*, +4 to Agility-related totals, both with *Cybernetics: Drug (R1)* and *Burn-Out (R7)*, disappears after 30 minutes; Installation Difficulty 11; cost 11 (11,000 credits).

Claws

Long, lethal blades, these claws are stored in the forearm and spring from the top of the wrist. Relies on melee combat. Requires one upgrade slot in an arm.

Natural Hand-to-Hand Weapon: Claws (R1), Strength Damage +1D, with *Cybernetics: Arm (R1)*; Installation Difficulty +2 to base; cost +2 to base (+2,000 credits).

DermalPlate

The character has thick, rubbery plates installed over major areas. Dermal plate is normally installed on the chest and arms.

Natural Armor: Dermal Plate (R1), +1D to damage resistance totals, with *Cybernetics: Plate (R1)*; Installation Difficulty 20; cost 20 (20,000 credits).

ElectricClaws

Similar to basic claws, these carry a powerful charge with them that allows them to do more damage. When drained, they do the same damage as normal claws. Relies on melee combat. Requires one upgrade slot in an arm.

Natural Hand-to-Hand Weapon: Electrified Claws (R2), Strength Damage +2D, with *Cybernetics: Arm (R1)* and *Price (R1)*, lose all but +1D of damage bonus after 10 uses and recharges in 30 minutes; Installation Difficulty +1 to base; cost +1 to base (+1,000 credits).

Enhanced Cyberarm

Joined to the character at the shoulder, a full replacement arm can offer a greater boost to a character's abilities than just replacing the hand (see next entry).

Skill Bonus: Strength (R4), +4 to *Climb/Jump*, *Lift*, and *Swim* totals, with *Cybernetics: Hand (R1)* and *Ability Loss (R1)*, only for single arm; Installation Difficulty 13; cost 13 (13,000 credits).

Enhanced Cyberhand

Basic enhanced cyberhands can improve climbing attempts.

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Skill Bonus: Strength (R2), +2 to Climb/Jump, Lift, and Swim totals, with Cybernetics: Hand (R1) and Ability Loss (R1), only for single hand; installation Difficulty 11; cost 11 (11,000 credits).

Enhanced Full Cyberleg

Fully replacing the leg allows the character to boost his kicking power and, to one degree or another, his movement.

Hypermovement (R2), +4 meters per round, Natural Hand-to-Hand Weapon: Increased Damage (R1), Strength Damage +1D to kick, with Cybernetics: Leg (R1) and Ability Loss (R1), only for single leg; installation Difficulty 16; cost 16 (16,000 credits). Note: If both legs are replaced, the character may not take the Ability Loss Limitation.

Equilibria

Fitted in place of the inner ear, the Equilibria improves balance.

Skill Bonus: Balance (R3), +3 to Brawling: Block, Melee Combat: Parry/Block, Acrobatics: Beam Walking, Dodge, and Riding totals, with Cybernetics: Ear (R1); installation Difficulty 20; cost 20 (20,000 credits).

EVD

The EVD (short for "eavesdropper") allows characters to better hear sounds within the normal frequency range.

Enhanced Sense: Hearing (R1), +1 to hearing-based skill totals, with Cybernetics: Ear (R1); installation Difficulty 20; cost 20 (20,000 credits).

Heat-Seeker

A visual unit designed to spot heat signatures of beings or objects.

Enhanced Sense: Sight (R1), +1 to sight-based skill totals, with Ability Loss: Daylight (R1), only works in low or no light, and Cybernetics: Eye (R1); installation Difficulty 18; cost 18 (18,000 credits).

Serpent

A small-caliber slug thrower that can be concealed in the wrist. It is a favorite among cyberweapons as it is easily concealed by syntheflesh and does not place the strain on the arm that larger weapons do. Relies on firearms. Requires one upgrade slot in an arm.

Natural Ranged Weapon: Gun (R1), 3D damage, with Cybernetics: Arm (R1); installation Difficulty +3 to base; cost +3 to base (+3,000 credits).

SuperSight

A cybernetic eye fitted into the socket, the SuperSight improves the character's ability to notice things.

Enhanced Sense: Sight (R1), +1 to sight-based skill totals, with Cybernetics: Eye (R1); installation Difficulty 20; cost 20 (20,000 credits).

CHAPTER 6: IMPROVING CHARACTERS

What's in this Chapter

Once players have taken their characters through an adventure or three, they'll want to improve or change them. This chapter provides guidelines for accomplishing that.

Learning and Improving Skills

When a player first creates a character, she should use the character creation guidelines for gaining attributes and skills.

Players whose characters have been through at least one adventure can use Character Points, accumulated from completing adventures, to learn new skills and improve old ones. Spending Character Points this way may be done only between adventures.

In addition to Character Points, the character needs experience with the skill, either through training or by attempting to use the skill (through rolling its die code or its governing attribute's die code, regardless of the outcome) during an adventure. If the Galaxy Master (GM) decides that there is a significant amount of training involved (such as improving a skill beyond 6D), or the character needs to find a suitable teacher, that might become an adventure's focus. (The teacher must have a skill die code higher than the one the potential student currently has.)

The cost of getting one pip in a new base skill equals the number before the "D" in the governing attribute's die code.

***Example:** If a character wants to learn languages after an adventure and he has a Knowledge die code of 3D, the first pip in Languages costs him three Character Points. The hero then has a 3D+1 in his languages skill.*

The cost of improving an existing skill is determined in the same way, except that the number of dice in the skill (instead of in the attribute) is used to determine the cost.

***Example:** A character has a Dodge of 4D+2 and wants to increase it. To raise the skill by one pip to 5D, the character must spend four Character Points. To increase the skill to 5D+1 after the next scenario, the character must spend five Character Points.*

The cost to get one pip in a new specialization equals one-half of the number before the "D" in the governing attribute or skill's die code. The cost to improve an existing specialization by one pip equals one-half of the number before the "D" in specialization skill's die code. (In both cases, round up.)

A character does not need the governing skill to get a specialization in it. However, if he does have one, getting a specialization in it acts as a bonus to the base skill when taking actions of that type, but it does not also improve all uses of the base skill.

***Example:** for a character with 6D in firearms to gain a energy weapons specialization, he needs to spend three*

Character Points to get a +1 in the specialization. The full firearms skill, however, stays at 6D.

Specializations that are associated with a full skill improve when the base skill improves.

A character may improve a skill or any of its specializations but not both. In other words, a character may improve as many specializations as he desires at the same time, though he cannot improve them at the same time as he's improving the governing skill. Skills and specializations may only be improved by one pip each in between each adventure.

Once characters reach 8D in a skill, Galaxy Master (GM)s may choose to use the upper limit rule for improving attributes (see that section for details).

Extrnormal skills cost twice as much to learn as other skills. Skills gained due to a Special Ability are not improved when that Special Ability is improved. Instead, they are increased as a normal skill.

Improving Strength Damage

As a character's *Strength* or *Lift* goes up or is altered by Special Abilities, Disadvantages, or skill improvement, re-figure the Strength Damage die code: Take the character's new *Strength* or *Lift* (including any modifiers from Disadvantages or Special Abilities) and drop the pips. Divide by 2, and round up. This is the Strength Damage die code.

Improving Attributes

With the exception of Extrnormal (such as *Metaphysics*) and *Funds*, the attributes you choose for your character usually represent her maximum potential. Most of the time, you'll improve your character's attributes by training in one particular aspect (improving skills), through temporary means (taking drugs), or with implanted equipment. Nonetheless, some freak industrial accident or bio-manipulation experiment might provide you with areas to improve your character's base attributes. (Some characters, such as kids, might start with fewer attribute dice, but their excuse for their attributes' improvement is puberty.) There are two ways to do this.

The first way is how kids improve their normal attributes and how everyone improves their Extrnormal attributes. The Galaxy Master (GM) may chose to use this option for adult characters who want to increase their normal attributes.

In the first method, to boost an attribute by one pip costs 10 times the number before the attribute's "D" in Character Points. Generally, a single attribute may be raised only one pip per adventure, though it's possible that the effects of the situation influence the character's physical makeup for a while or the Galaxy Master (GM) may decide that the situation was so life-changing that more than one attribute may be boosted by more than one pip.

There is an upper limit using this method: Every time an adult character boosts a normal attribute, the player rolls that attribute's new die code and the Galaxy Master (GM) rolls one die less than the maximum die code for the species, including any appropriate Special Abilities. (The maximum for all attributes except Extrnormal and Funds is 5D, unless altered by a Special Ability, so the Galaxy Master (GM) would roll 4D.) If the Galaxy Master (GM)'s roll equals or exceeds the player's roll, the attribute improves. If it does not, the attribute does not improve, the character gets half the Character Points back, and the character has reached her upper limit for that attribute. Ignore this upper limit rule for Funds and Extrnormal attributes.

In the second way, the Galaxy Master (GM) requires all adult characters to take the Increased Attribute Special Ability (discussed in the "Character Options" chapter) in order to improve their *Agility*, *Strength*, *Mechanical*, *Knowledge*, *Perception*, and *Technical* attributes. There is no maximum bonus that the character may gain with this method, aside from whatever roleplaying or adventure obstacles the Galaxy Master (GM) decides to include.

Effects of Character Options

When determining how many Character Points a player needs to improve his character's skills and attributes, ignore any modifiers provided by Advantages, Disadvantages, or Special Abilities.

Changing Body Points

As a character's Strength goes up or is altered by Special Abilities or Disadvantages, you'll need to change the Body Points amount. Roll the dice indicated by the Special Ability or Disadvantage (if applicable), and add any pips or other modifier. (Do not re-roll the character's entire *Strength* – only the amount that changed.) Then add or subtract, as dictated by the Special Ability or Disadvantage, that number from the Body Points total.

Changing Wounds

As a character's Body Points go up or down, the Wound level changes. For characters who rely solely on Wounds, the only way to alter how quickly or slowly the character reaches each level is by changing his damage resistance total. This could be through a change in Strength or by acquiring more protective gear or protecting Special Abilities.

Gaining and Losing Character Options

As players take their characters through adventures and develop them, they may decide that the Advantages, Special Abilities, and Disadvantages the characters started with don't fit the current concept. To be flexible, there are ways you can accommodate your players' desire to grow their characters. For example, an "enemy" might eventually be killed, a character might be able to negotiate a way out of *Debt*, or an *Advantage Flaw* might be "repaired."

Getting rid of and gaining Advantages, Special Abilities, and Disadvantages should only happen after the character has been used during several adventures and has had a chance to come up with reasons for character alteration.

These game mechanics for gaining Advantages, Special Abilities, and Disadvantages apply only to individuals who seek to have them. Because of an adventure or series of adventures, the members of a group may each acquire the same new Advantage or Disadvantage. In this case, each hero does not pay the cost or receive any Character Point benefits outlined here. The new Advantage can be considered a reward for being part of the team and the scenario, while the new Disadvantage would be a penalty.

Advantages

There are two methods for acquiring new Advantages:

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- (1) The player pays, in Character Points, 5 times the rank of the Advantage.
- (2) The player takes an equivalent amount of dice in Disadvantages and pays a number of Character Points equal to the rank of the Advantage. In either case, the player must come up with a well-crafted story for getting the new Advantage that's backed by actual experiences in one or more adventures. The story, and its related Advantage, must be approved by the Galaxy Master (GM).

Generally, a player may not remove an Advantage from a character, but it might be lost in the course of roleplaying due to player negligence (that is, continuously bad roleplaying or ignoring Disadvantages) or some tragic game-world mishap (such as a *Patron's* city being destroyed). If the loss occurred through no fault of the character, the Galaxy Master (GM) may give the player a consolation gift of three Character Points per rank in the Advantage, or may substitute an equally valuable Advantage. Galaxy Master (GM)s should not reward the loss of an Advantage through player negligence.

Disadvantages

There are also two methods for permanently overcoming a Disadvantage:

- (1) The player pays 10 times the die code of the Disadvantage.
- (2) The player loses an equal number of Advantages and pays a number of Character Points equal to the die code of the Disadvantage. As with Advantages, the player must have a good tale and the character has adequate adventuring experience before the Galaxy Master (GM) should approve the loss of any Disadvantage.

Example: If a character had Equipment (R3), he might also have a Rank 3 Disadvantage tied to it. If the character can get rid of the equipment (which he might not be able to do in some settings- a cursed amulet or a cybernetic spine, for example), then the Disadvantage goes away.

When a player wishes to add another Disadvantage to her hero, she receives an immediate bonus for this choice if she isn't using the Disadvantage to help her get a new Advantage. For the new Disadvantage, the character receives a number of Character Points equal to 3 times the die code of the Disadvantage. However, the character now has a new limitation to contend with!

Special Abilities

Unless the Galaxy Master (GM) decides to reward a character with a Special Ability, it costs 5 times the sum of the Special Ability's base cost plus the current number of ranks in Character Points - and a really good excuse - to acquire or improve a Special Ability after character creation. A character may improve a Special Ability by only one rank after each adventure, unless there is some compelling reason to allow otherwise. Galaxy Master (GM)s may disallow increases in Special Abilities if they feel the reason for the improvement isn't good enough.

Example: A character has Accelerated Healing at Rank 1. She decides to spend some time in a monastery, learning how to improve it. The cost in Character Points to increase her Special Ability to Rank 2 is 16 (5 times the sum of the base cost of 3 plus the current rank of 1).

Characters can have their Special Abilities weakened and occasionally even lose them entirely, and

they get no reward for this. In other circumstances, the character could wish to use all his mental and spiritual resources to defeat an otherwise unstoppable force.

In these instances, by sacrificing one rank in a Special Ability, a character receives 2 times the base cost of the Special Ability in Character Points. If the player wants to remove completely a Special Ability from the character, however, he reduces the Special Ability to one rank, receiving Character Points for each rank lost, as above. In sacrificing the final rank of the Special Ability, the character receives in Character Points 7 times the initial cost of the Special Ability. Costs of Enhancements and Limitations are ignored. The character also, of course, loses all Enhancements and Limitations associated with that Special Ability when he permanently sacrifices it. (Getting the Special Ability back requires the character to spend Character Points for it as a new Special Ability.)

The act of losing Special Abilities does not typically count as an action. Even so, some circumstances may justify a Moderate willpower roll or the character's complete concentration for a full round to simulate the character summoning his deep inner resources.

The player can combine losing Special Abilities with gaining Special Abilities to simulate an event that alters the character's extraordinary abilities completely. In this case, if the Galaxy Master (GM) accepts the player's explanation, simply trade the hero's current Special Abilities for Character Points and spend them on the desired new Special Abilities.

Gaining and Losing Special Ability Enhancements and Limitations

It is possible for a character to gain or lose control over a Special Ability, beyond what increases in skill and Special Ability rank allow. Unlike Advantages and Disadvantages, Special Ability Enhancements and Limitations are fundamental to a Special Ability's manifestation in a character or item.

Enhancements and Limitations must be purchased or overcome with Character Points, representing the character's greater understanding of the Special Ability. Also, the Galaxy Master (GM) may not allow some Limitations to be bought off without an excellent plot-related explanation, especially if the Limitation is physical in nature. Unless the Enhancement or Limitation relates to the character's understanding of the Special Ability, such as many Minor Stigmas, a reasonable explanation of how the Special Ability has changed is also required.

Gaining a new Enhancement costs 8 times the desired rank times the base cost of the Enhancement in Character Points. Although most Enhancements have several possible ranks that can be purchased in stages, common sense should apply. A Special Ability may obtain new levels for the same Enhancement, but the nature of previously added Enhancements cannot be altered, unless the Enhancements are removed.

***Example:** An Enhancement that provides an extra effect must be purchased at the full cost of each desired effect. A player could not, for instance, buy one rank of Additional effect: Energy Sustenance for Attack Resistance, and then later spend more Character Points to increase the Enhancement rank and change it to attack reflection.*

However, a character with an Additional effect of stickiness on the Natural Ranged Weapon Special Ability could purchase additional ranks of the version of the Enhancement.

Eliminating a Limitation costs 10 times the die code of the Limitation in Character Points. As with Enhancements, it is possible to buy off a Limitation in stages, if the stages are related. The *Debt* Limitation probably couldn't be bought down one level at a time, but a *Flaw* with multiple ranks could be, if the Narrator allowed. The Galaxy Master (GM) may disallow buying off certain variations of

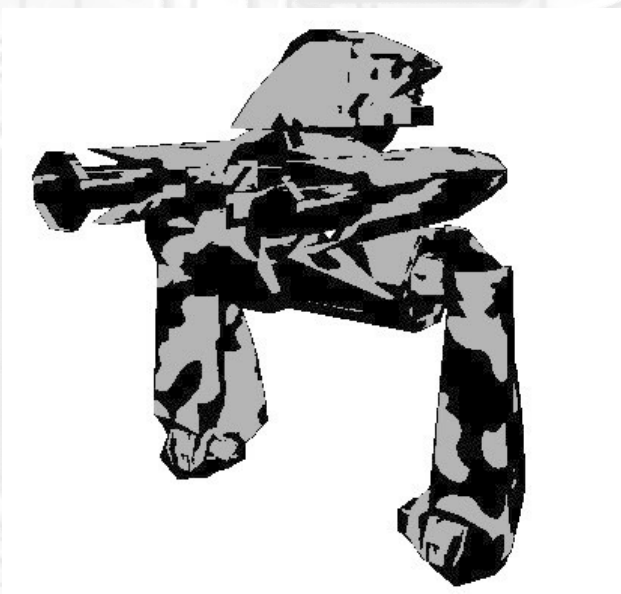
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Limitations because they are inextricably tied to the related Special Ability.

A character can also remove an Enhancement or acquire a Limitation after character creation. A character who purposely removes an Enhancement from a Special Ability receives 4 times the rank times the base cost of the Enhancement in Character Points. The character can't rely on the Enhancement until the player buys it again. A character who takes a Limitation for a Special Ability after character creation gains 5 times the rank times the base cost of the Limitation in Character Points. Since it is unlikely (though not impossible) that a character would do either of these deliberately, the player must come up with a reasonable explanation for how the Special Ability has become less useful. Again, the Galaxy Master (GM) may take away Enhancement or Limitations based on the adventure situation and does not necessarily have to award points for it.

DEVELOPMENT PATHS

An additional mechanic in the AE:RPG system is the idea of player "Development Paths". Players identify a path they want to pursue (drawn from paths offered in the various AE books or created by the player with GM approval). Each time they gain certain experiences along that path, they would add dice or pips to their rating in specific abilities. In this way players grow in ability as they grow as characters, while the GM retains a great deal of control over the specifics of the story arcs. *(More on this idea is provided in the Galaxy Master Guide).*



CHAPTER 7: GAME BASICS

WHAT'S IN THIS CHAPTER

This chapter defines how to play the game, from rolling the dice to using skills. The basic unit of game time, order of play, and what players can have their characters do on a turn are explained.

Suggestions for determining the Difficulty of actions are offered, including some examples.

The introduction offered an overview of how the game works, so some of this may look familiar.

However, this chapter clarifies a lot of special situations that will undoubtedly come up during play.

ROLLING DICE

A die code shows how good a character is in a particular area, how harmful a weapon is, how useful a Special Ability or tool is, and so on. Each die code (also known as a value) indicates the number of six-sided dice you roll (1D, 2D, 3D, 4D, 5D, etc.), and sometimes an added amount of "+1" or "+2" – referred to as pips– you add to the total result you roll on the dice.

An Advantage, Special Ability, or piece of equipment may provide a bonus to the roll. If the bonus is in the form of a die code (such as +1D), then you add the listed number of regular dice to the amount you would roll. If the bonus is in the form of a number (such as +2), then you add the amount to the total that you rolled on the dice.

***Example:** A shovel add 1D to digging attempts. A character who decides to dig a hole uses her lift skill. If your character has a lift skill of 4D, you would roll five dice to determine how well your character dug the hole with the shovel.*

Alternate Die Rolling Options

Some Galaxy Master (GM)s prefer rolling fewer dice. To this end, a die code simplification chart has been included in an appendix of this book. It offers two solutions for reducing the number of dice while retaining some of the randomness of rolling dice.

For converting die codes in the middle of a game without referencing the table, multiply the number in front of the "D" by 3 for tasks that ought to fail (such as the damage resistance total of a cannon fodder character) or 4 for actions that ought to succeed (such as something the players' characters are doing).

Wild Die

(Note: Use of the Wild Die is an option in Astral Empires The Roleplaying Game and you will find that it is not used in some Astral Empires sourcebooks. Ultimately, its use in your games is up to the GM.)

Whenever any player, including the Galaxy Master (GM), makes any roll, one of the dice must be different from the rest (in size or color). Designated as the Wild Die, this odd die represents the vagaries of life – like the direction of the wind affecting the flight of a bullet – that are too small to warrant their own Difficulty modifiers.

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***Example:** Your character's Agility attribute is 3D+1, so if your character tried to jump onto a table, you would roll two regular dice and one Wild Die.*

If the player has only 1D to roll, then that one die is always the Wild Die.

If the player rolls a 6 on the Wild Die, this is called a Critical Success and she may add the 6 to her total and roll the Wild Die again. As long as she turns up Critical Successes on that die, she may continue to add them to her total and continue to roll. If she rolls anything other than a 6, she adds that number to the total and stops rolling.

If the player rolls a 1 on the initial toss of the Wild Die, this is called a Critical Failure, and the Galaxy Master (GM) may choose one of two options for the result, depending on the gravity of the situation.

The Critical Failure cancels out the highest roll. Then the player adds the remaining values, and the roll is determined normally.

Add the dice results normally, but a complication occurs. The Galaxy Master (GM) gauges the significance of the complication by the total generated- from a funny, "nearly didn't do it" result for a high total to a serious, "we have a problem" obstacle for a low total.

When using the second option, make certain the complication chosen relates to the task attempted. It should serve as an extra, minor obstacle the characters must now deal with or, more often, as a place to insert a bit of comic relief. Only on rare occasions (such as numerous poor decisions by the players) should a complication be without solutions or even deadly. The complications can also serve as opportunities to bring nearly invincible characters down to a more reasonable level.

***Note:** Unlike rolling a Critical Failure initially on the Wild Die, no complications occur when a 1 shows up on later tosses of the Wild Die in the same roll.*

Improving a Roll

The average person fails at average activities nearly half of the time. Characters aren't average people, so they need ways to beat those odds. Thus, they have Character and Fate Points, which represent those surges of adrenaline, sudden insights, and other unexplained helpful acts of chance.

Players may not trade Character Points for Fate Points, nor may they trade Fate Points for Character Points. A player may only spend her Character and Fate Points on her character's rolls. She may not spend more Character or Fate Points than the character has listed on her sheet. Except when allowed by the Galaxy Master (GM) for exceptionally cinematic situations, players may not use Character Points and Fate Points on the same roll.

Character Points

Whenever a player makes any roll (attribute, skill, damage, Special Ability, and so on), he has the option to spend Character Points to increase the total rolled. He may spend one Character Point for each extra Wild Die rolled, to a maximum decided upon by the Galaxy Master (GM) and based on the challenge level of the adventure. (For adventures with easy challenges, the maximum is two; for more cinematic adventures, the maximum is five; for universe-shaking ones, the maximum is unlimited.)

A player may choose to spend Character Points before or after he makes a roll - or both - but always before the Galaxy Master (GM) determines the result. The Galaxy Master (GM) need not tell the player

whether he should spend more points to improve a roll.

Extra Wild Dice gained from spending Character Points each work like a normal Wild Die except that a Critical Failure counts as a 1; it does not adversely affect the roll. Because of the special nature of Character Point Wild Dice, the player may wish to roll these dice separately from his normal Wild Die.

Once used, the character loses the point. Players get Character Points for their characters by overcoming obstacles, roleplaying well, and having fun. They can also use Character Points to improve skills (see the "Improving Characters" chapter for details).

Fate Points

Each players' character has a personal moral code, generally involving a sense of honor and justice. The devotion to this code is represented by Fate Points. Violating that code takes a little bit away from that nature, which is represented by a loss of Fate Points.

***Example:** Heroic characters receive Fate Points for doing good, such as protecting innocents, bringing an evil character to justice (regardless of the justice system's final decision), preventing damage, and saving a life (except the character's own). Heroic characters lose Fate Points for performing evil actions, such as stealing, maliciously destroying property, taking a life, and other terrible acts, especially if they use Fate Points to accomplish that harm.*

Individual ethical codes may differ from the heroic code, but the more well-defined the code is, the easier it is for the Galaxy Master (GM) to determine when to reward Fate Points – and when to take them away.

When a player feels she needs even greater help for her roll, she may spend a Fate Point to double the number of dice she normally gets for that roll. However, the player only rolls one Wild Die. Furthermore, anything that's not part of the character – weapon damage die codes, equipment bonuses, and so on – is not doubled.

***Example:** Your character has a demolitions skill with a die code of 4D+2. Normally, you would roll three regular dice and one Wild Die and add two pips to the total. But this time, you want to make sure the villain's car doesn't ever move, so you spend a Fate Point. This allows you to roll seven regular dice and one Wild Die and add four pips to the total (for a total of 8D+4, or twice what you'd normally roll).*

Usually, a player may use only one Fate Point per roll per round, though a character may improve several different actions in a round with several different Fate Points expenditures. Particularly beneficial or malicious deeds presented and roleplayed well by the player or game-master may allow additional Fate Points to be spent on a single roll.

In the general course of play, a Fate Point is useful for one roll only. However, once per game session, a player may choose to spend a Fate Point climactically, which doubles all of the character's rolls for that round. The Galaxy Master (GM) also may allow players to spend Fate Points climactically several times during the highest point of the adventure (the climax).

Players may only spend Fate Points before making a roll. Furthermore, double the initial number before applying any die code penalties and bonuses.

Once used, the character loses the Fate Point – but he may earn it back at the end of the game if it was used for a deed that supported his moral code. However, if the character used a Fate Point to go against his moral code, the Galaxy Master (GM) may decide that it costs an additional Fate Point.

As characters become more experienced, the Galaxy Master (GM) may include further restrictions on Fate Point use. Galaxy Master (GM)s might allow moderately experienced characters (those with at least 6D in several skills) to spend Fate Points only on actions that promote the story line, while highly experienced characters (those with at least 9D in several skills) might be permitted to use Fate Points only during climactic moments in the campaign.

Game-Enhancing Cards

In this rulebook, you'll occasionally find references to "card use." One of the unique features of certain out of print West End Games' systems was their unique game-enhancing card decks. These cards can help players and Galaxy Master (GM)s alter outcomes, influence initiative, and make dramatic scenes even more exciting. You can include one of these decks in your Astral Empires roleplaying games if you can track them down on the used market. (*Places like eBay might be a good option to start your quest*).

USING SKILLS

At those times when there's a chance that a character may fail at an action, that character must make a skill check. The player decides what she wants her character to do and which skill is best for accomplishing the task (sometimes with the help of the Galaxy Master (GM)). The Galaxy Master (GM) determines a suitable Difficulty number, which the player must meet or beat by rolling the number of dice in the skill and adding the results.

Untrained Skill Use

If a character doesn't have dice in the skill required to attempt an action, she generally may use the die code of the attribute under which that skill falls. This is sometimes referred to as defaulting to the attribute or using the skill untrained or unskilled. The Galaxy Master (GM) may include an unskilled modifier to the Difficulty. This modifier takes into account that people who aren't trained or don't have experience in certain tasks usually have a harder time doing them. Typically, this modifier is +5, but it could be as low as +1 for simple tasks or much higher for complex plans. The Galaxy Master (GM) may rule that some situations, such as building a spaceship or performing brain surgery, are impossible for anyone to attempt without the proper training and the correct skills.

When attributes are given in the text along with the skill, such as in spell descriptions, resisting Wounds, and so on, do not apply the untrained modifier. This also includes most uses of *Dodge* and *Brawling* in combat situations, attempts to find clues in a room with search, and resisting interaction attempts or mental attacks with *Willpower*.

ROUNDS AND INITIATIVE

Generally, time in a roleplaying game doesn't matter too much. A character may spend several hours searching a library, though only a minute passes as far as the players and Galaxy Master (GM) are concerned. To keep the story line moving, sometimes it's necessary to skip the tedious parts.

More intense scenes require more detail. In these cases, time slows to units of five seconds called rounds. Each character may take one action in the round with no penalty. Unless the character has

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special skills or abilities, additional actions increase the Difficulty of performing each task; this concept is dealt with later, in the "Multiple Actions" section. Once a round ends, the next one begins, continuing until the scene ends (with the task completed, the opponent subdued, and so on).

Since all characters in a scene are making actions in the same five-second round, the actual length of game time taken up by an action is usually less than five seconds. This is obviously the case when a single character is performing multiple actions, but it is also true when one character reacts to what another character is doing. Actions in rounds are not simultaneous (actions out of rounds sometimes are).

Determining initiative does not count as an action.

Once rounds have been declared and depending on the situation, the Galaxy Master (GM) applies one of three methods to determine in what order everyone goes.

Initiative Method 1

The first method is to allow whoever makes the first significant action (such as those surprising other characters in an ambush) to act first in the round. The characters retain the same order until the scene ends.

Initiative Methods 2 and 3

The other two ways start out the same, by requiring the characters involved to make *Perception* rolls to generate initiative totals. The Galaxy Master (GM) makes one *Perception* roll for each character or group of characters he controls, depending on the number and how important each character is to the adventure. The character with the highest roll takes her action first. The character with the second highest roll then takes his action, and so on. After the last character performs her action, the round ends and a new one begins. Note that characters rendered unconscious, immobile, or otherwise unable to act lose their action until they wake up or get free, even if they haven't taken it already.

The Galaxy Master (GM) may choose then to keep the order for the entire scene (the faster method) or have everyone roll at the beginning of each round (the more realistic yet slower way).

The Galaxy Master (GM) and players may use Character Points, but not Fate Points, to increase their initiative rolls if they want. Spending one Character Point, for example, allows the player or Galaxy Master (GM) to add the result of one extra Wild Die roll to the initiative roll.

Initiative Ties/No Rolls

In the event of ties, or if the Galaxy Master (GM) chooses not to have the players roll to determine initiative, comparing attribute and skill die codes can decide the order of actions. The character with the highest value in the characteristic goes first, and so on. Once a character has a spot in the order, it doesn't change, regardless of how other characteristics compare. Ties are broken by moving to the next factor and looking at those values. The order: (1) ability or talent that allows the character to go first, (2) *Perception*, (3) *Search*, (4) *Agility*, (5) *Dodge*, (6) special equipment or situation that allows the character to go before another character.

Optional Initiative Bonus

For every 2D over the base attribute in search (round down) or 4D in *Agility* (round down), a character receives +1 to his initiative roll. Every six ranks in a *Skill Bonus* or *Increased Attribute* Special Ability that affects *Agility* or search provides a +1 bonus.

Performing Actions in Rounds

A character does not need to declare what she intends to do until her turn comes up in the round. Once the character decides to take her turn, she may use as many actions as she wants, but her player must determine the multi-action penalty for the total number of actions that the character wishes to take in that round. The character does not need to declare when figuring the multi-action penalty what she intends to do with all of her actions. Note that waiting counts as an action (once per each time the character wishes to wait). The character may take no additional actions once the multi-action penalty is figured. Any actions calculated into the multi-action penalty but that the character did not use by the end of the round are lost.

A character may take a few actions, wait, take a few more, wait again, and so on, as long as the player has declared a sufficient number of actions in which to do everything she wants her character to do (including waiting).

A character may only interrupt another character's action if she has waited and after that character has made the skill roll and spent any points but before the Galaxy Master (GM) declares the result.

Example: A character surprises a thug. Because she got the jump on him, the Galaxy Master (GM) decides the character may act first in this round. The character decides to wait and see what the thug will do, choosing to take one other action this turn. The thug takes a swing at her, so the character decides to dodge. If the character has no ability that gives her extra actions, she may take only one action without penalty. She used that one action on waiting. When she makes her dodge roll, it's at -1D, because it's the second action she's taking this round.

Only a few instances exist in which the Galaxy Master (GM) may permit a character to "move up" her turn and react to another character's actions. These include catching a thrown object, resisting certain mental attempts, and other situations that the Galaxy Master (GM) deems appropriate. These do take the character's action, though the player can declare that her character will perform multiple actions in the round. For the most part, having a turn later in the round than another's simply means that another character could take advantage of the situation faster.

Multiple Actions

Characters may attempt to perform several tasks in a single round, or, if the action takes longer than one round to complete, in the same minimum time period. The more they try to do, however, the less care and concentration they can apply to each action. It becomes more difficult to succeed at all of the tasks. Thus, for most characters, for each action taken beyond the first, the player must subtract 1D from all skill or attribute rolls (but not damage, damage resistance, or initiative rolls). Thus, trying to do four actions in one round gives the character a -3D modifier to each roll. For characters with an ability that increases their base number of actions, the multi-action penalty doesn't take effect until the character uses up his allotment of actions. For example, if a character with an action allotment of eight per round wants to do nine actions, each of the nine actions is at -1D.

Only equipment and weapons suited for quick multiple actions may be used several times (up to the limit of their capabilities) in a round. Some examples include semi-automatic guns or items with little or no reload time, like hands or small melee weapons.

A character may not rely on any skill or attribute reduced to zero.

Actions that Take Time

Each entry on this non-exhaustive list counts as one action taking no more than five seconds to perform. The Galaxy Master (GM) may decide that certain types of actions offer a bonus or special effect and, thus, have requirements to perform. The suggested skill to use with each action is included at the end of the task's description.

Bash: Hit an opponent with a blunt weapon. (*Melee Combat*)

Catch: Stop the movement of a thrown or dropped object or person. (The catcher must act later in the round than the person doing the throwing or dropping. This is one of the few cases where a character may "move up" his turn.) (*Throwing*)

Choke: Grab a person's neck and gripping tightly. (*Brawling*)

Communicate: Relay plans or exchange complex ideas and information with other characters (more than a few words or one sentence). (An interaction skill or only roleplaying)

Disarm: Remove an object from an opponent's hand. This action is treated as a called shot. (*Brawling, Firearms, Melee Combat, Missile Weapons, Throwing*)

Dodge: Actively evade an attack. (*Dodge*)

Entangle: Throw an entangling weapon at an opponent. (*Throwing*)

Escape: Break a hold. (*Lift*)

Grab: Latch onto an opponent. Depending on where the opponent was grabbed, he can take other actions. (*Brawling*)

Kick: Strike out at an opponent with a foot. (*Brawling*)

Leap: Jump over an opponent, onto a table, or any other such maneuver. (*Climb/Jump*)

Lunge: Stab forward with a pointed weapon, such as a sword or a knife. (*Melee Combat*)

Move: Maneuver 51% of the character's Move or more around the area. The Galaxy Master (GM) should call only for a roll if the terrain is challenging or the maneuvering complex. During some rounds, the Galaxy Master (GM) may decide that existing factors dictate all movement, regardless of length, require an action. (*Running, Swim*)

Parry: Block an opponent's blow. (*Brawling, Melee Combat*)

Pin: Trap an opponent by either holding him to the ground or tacking a piece of his clothing to a wall or other nearby object. When pinning the whole opponent, this is the same concept as tackling. Pinning prevents the victim from using the fastened part. (*Brawling, Melee Combat, Missile Weapons, Throwing*)

Punch: Strike out at an opponent with a fist. (*Brawling*)

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Push: Forcibly move an opponent. (*Brawling*)

Ready a Weapon: Draw or reload a gun or bow, unsheathe a knife, and similar actions. This generally does not require a skill roll, but the Galaxy Master (GM) may chose to require one related to the weapon in question for particularly stressful situations.

Run Away: Flee from the scene. (*Running*)

Shoot: Fire a missile or projectile weapon. (firearms, missile weapons)

Slash: Swing an edged weapon. (melee combat)

Switch a Weapon or Equipment's Setting: Although rare, some weapons and equipment have more than one damage or effect setting. It takes an action to change the setting. This generally does not require a skill roll, but the Galaxy Master (GM) may chose to require one related to the item in question for particularly stressful situations.

Tackle: Bodily overcome an opponent. Once tackled, the opponent can do no other physical actions other than speak or attempt to break the attacker's grip. (*Brawling*)

Throw a Weapon or Object: Toss something at an opponent. (*Throwing*)

Trip: Quickly force one or both of an opponent's legs upward (*Brawling*)

Use a Skill or Ability: Perform a quick action related to a Special Ability the character possesses or a skill he wants to use. A character may not use a Special Ability he does not have, though he may use a skill he has no experience in (possibly at a penalty). Note that some skills and Special Abilities take longer than one action or one round to perform, so trying to do them in five seconds incurs penalties.

Vehicle Maneuver: Perform a stunt in a moving vehicle. (*Exoskeleton Operation, Piloting, Vehicle Operation*)

Waiting: Watch for a better opportunity to perform an action. This does not require a skill roll, but it does take concentration.

Free Actions

Free actions are anything a character can automatically perform except under the most extreme conditions. They don't require a skill roll or much effort. If the Galaxy Master (GM) thinks a task requires concentration (and has a possibility of failure, thus requiring a skill roll), it's not a free action.

- ▲ Speaking a few words to someone nearby
- ▲ A quick glance around a room (and possibly a roll of *Perception*)
- ▲ Moving 50% or less of the character's Move over an easy area or up to a meter over more challenging terrain
- ▲ Additionally, the following player actions do not count as character actions:
 - ▲ Determining initiative
 - ▲ Rolling to resist damage
 - ▲ Rolling *Willpower* or *Knowledge* to determine the emotional effects of the environment on the character

Related Skills

In some situations, two or more skills may suit the task at hand. The Galaxy Master (GM) can declare that only one is suitable for the current circumstances. Or he can choose the primary one and decide which other skills are appropriate secondary, or related, skills that the character can use to improve his chances with the primary skill. The Galaxy Master (GM) sets difficulties for each skill. The character first performs the related skills, and then he attempts the primary one.

To determine the related skill's modifier to the primary skill, the Galaxy Master (GM) subtracts the Difficulty from the total rolled with the related skill; this determines the number of result points from the roll. Then he divides that number by 2, rounding up, to get the modifier to the total rolled with the primary skill. The minimum related skill modifier is 1. If the skill total was less than the Difficulty, the modifier is subtracted from the primary skill total. If the skill total was equal to or greater than the Difficulty, the modifier is added to the primary skill total.

The character may perform the related skills and the primary skill successively, but the related skill modifier is only good for the one initially intended attempt and the character must make that attempt within a short time of using the other skills. Should the character decide to perform the primary skill and the related skill at the same time, he takes the multi-action penalty.

***Example:** Your character has to carefully place some explosive charges on a wall. You decide that the character first examines the wall for weaknesses (using the Search skill). Once examination has been completed and the search roll has been made, your Galaxy Master (GM) lets you know that you beat the Difficulty by four points. This gives you a result point bonus of +2. You apply the modifier to your demolitions roll only, which must take place immediately after your character's examination of the wall.*

Galaxy Master (GM)s also can use the related-skills guidelines for deciding how well one person can help another person.

Preparing

A character willing to spend twice as much time to complete a task receives a +1D bonus for the die roll for every doubling of time, up to a maximum bonus of +3D. However, the character can do nothing else or be otherwise distracted (such as getting shot at) during this time.

Rushing

A character can also attempt to perform an action that normally requires two or more rounds (10 seconds or more) in less time. The Difficulty increases depending on how much less time the character puts into the task: +5 for 25% less time, +10 for 50% less time, and +20 for 75% less time. A character may not perform any task in less than 25% of the normally needed time. Thus, to rush an hour-long surgery into 30 minutes, the Difficulty increases by +10.

Of course, not every task can be rushed. If in doubt, the game-master should ask the player to justify how the character can speed up the task.

Groups

To save time, Galaxy Master (GM)s may chose to roll one action for a group of characters he controls. Any number can belong to the group. Each member of the group does not have to perform exactly the same maneuver, but they do need to take similar actions. A Galaxy Master (GM) could make one roll for a pack of wolves who attack different characters, but he would have to separate the pack into those attacking and those circling if the Galaxy Master (GM) wanted to have them perform those distinctly different activities.

CHOOSING DIFFICULTIES

There are two possibilities for assigning difficulties to a specific action: a Difficulty number or an opposed roll. Generally, the adventure specifies the Difficulty and what skill is needed, but the Galaxy Master (GM) may come across circumstances that were not foreseen. In such cases, use these guidelines to decide what to do.

Certain circumstances (typically involving a character attempting a task without a force actively opposing her, such as climbing a wall or piloting a boat) may call for a static Difficulty number. In these cases, select a standard Difficulty or use a special Difficulty. Circumstances involving an actively opposing force call for an opposed Difficulty.

Standard Difficulties

A standard Difficulty is a number that the Galaxy Master (GM) assigns to an action based on how challenging the Galaxy Master (GM) thinks it is. Existing conditions can change the Difficulty of an action. For instance, walking has an Automatic Difficulty for most characters, but the Galaxy Master (GM) may require someone who is just regaining the use of his legs to make a Very difficult running roll to move even a few steps.

The numbers in parentheses indicate the range of Difficulty numbers for that level.

Automatic (0): Almost anyone can perform this action; there is no need to roll. (Generally, this Difficulty is not listed in a pre-generated adventure; it is included here for reference purposes.)

Very Easy (1-5): Nearly everyone can accomplish this task. Typically, tasks with such a low Difficulty only are rolled when they are crucial to the scenario.

Easy (6-10): Although characters usually have no Difficulty with this task, an untrained character may find it challenging.

Moderate (11-15): There is a fair chance that the average character will fail at this type of task. Tasks of this type require skill, effort, and concentration.

Difficult (16-20): Those with little experience in the task must have a lot of luck to accomplish this type of action.

Very difficult (21-25): The average character only rarely succeeds at these kinds of task. Only the most talented regularly succeed.

Heroic (26-30), Legendary (31 or more): These kinds of tasks are nearly impossible, though there's still a slim chance that lucky average or highly experienced characters can accomplish them.

Generic Standard Difficulties

Level	Number
Automatic	0
Very Easy	1-5
Easy	6-10
Moderate	11-15
Difficult	16-20
Very Difficult	21-25
Heroic	26-30
Legendary	31 or more

Opposed Difficulties

An opposed Difficulty (also called an opposed roll) applies when one character resists another character's action. In this case, both characters generate skill totals and compare them. The character with the higher value wins, and ties go to the initiator of the action.

In an opposed task, since both characters are actively doing something, both the initiator and the resisting character use up actions. This means that the resisting character can only participate in an opposed task either if he waited for the initiating character to make a move or if he was actively preparing for the attempt. Otherwise, the Galaxy Master (GM) may allow a reaction roll of the appropriate skill as a free action in some circumstances, or he may derive a Difficulty (see the derived entry under "*Special Difficulties*" for an example).

Special Difficulties

There are two special and optional difficulties: *Wild Die Only* and *Derived*.

Wild Die Only: The standard Difficulty of an action may be so much lower than a character's skill value that rolling and totaling dice would waste time. However, the Galaxy Master (GM) may feel that the situation is such that a complication could greatly affect the outcome of the scene. In such cases, the Galaxy Master (GM) may require the player to roll the Wild Die. A Critical Success result indicates that some special bit of good fortune occurred, while a Critical Failure indicates a minor complication. Any other result shows that the result is successful, though nothing special.

Derived: Any time one character does something to another character or animate creature or object, the base Difficulty equals 2 times the target's relevant opposing attribute or skill (drop the pips.) Galaxy Master (GM)s may further modify derived values, as the situation warrants. Derived values do not get the unskilled modifier if they are determined from the governing attribute.

Example: Your character attempts to intimidate a thug. The Galaxy Master (GM) could use the standard intimidation Difficulty of 10 or she could derive one from the thug's willpower skill, or, if he doesn't have one, the governing attribute, Knowledge. If his Knowledge has a die code of 3D+, then the base derived Difficulty is 6.

Generic Modifiers

The modifiers offered in a skill's list or a pre-generated adventure may not cover all the Galaxy Master (GM)'s needs. When conditions arise for which there aren't pre-established modifiers, use the chart herein to help at those times. Galaxy Master (GM)s can add these modifiers to opposed, standard, or derived Difficulty values.

Generic Difficulty Modifiers

Modifier	Condition	Situational Example
+16 or more	<i>Overwhelming Disadvantage</i>	Something affects the skill use in an almost crippling fashion (repairing a vehicle without proper tools).
+11-15	<i>Decisive disadvantage</i>	The skill use is very limited by circumstance (trying to find someone in complete darkness).
+6-10	<i>Significant Disadvantage</i>	The skill use is affected negatively (tracking someone through drizzling rain).
+1-5	<i>Slight Disadvantage</i>	There is an annoying problem (picking a lock by flashlight).
-1-5	<i>Slight Advantage</i>	A tool or modification that makes the skill use a little easier (small spikes on shoes for climb/jump).
-6-10	<i>Significant Advantage</i>	A tool or modification that makes the skill use much easier (rope with knots is used for climb/jump).
-11-15	<i>Decisive Advantage</i>	A tool specifically designed to make the job easier (complete language database used for languages).
-16 or more	<i>Overwhelming Advantage</i>	An exceptional tool or modification that specifically makes the skill use much easier (wilderness tools and equipment specially designed to help with survival).

Good Roleplaying Modifier

Galaxy Master (GM)s should reward good roleplaying by lowering the Difficulty a few points. The better the roleplaying- and the more entertaining the player makes the scenario- the higher the modifier the Galaxy Master (GM) should include.

Unskilled Attempts

Remember that someone without training or experience might, with blind luck, do better than someone with experience- but generally only that one time. There is no guarantee of future success. When a character defaults to the attribute, figure in not only a Difficulty modifier of +1, +5, or more, but also adjust the result accordingly: the result won't happen as precisely or stylishly as someone with skill.

Alternate Attribute Option

Sometimes it makes more sense to base a skill on a different attribute than the one it's under by default. In such cases as the Galaxy Master (GM) designates, subtract the skill value from the attribute value to get the number of skill adds. Then add those skill adds to the new attribute and roll away. Some example alternate skill-attribute combinations (and the reason for using each attribute) include:

- ▲ *Climb/Jump, Running, Swim: Strength* for distance; *Agility* for obstacles

- ▲ *Flying/O-G: Strength* for wings or to represent the physical strain of rapid movement; *Agility* for obstacles

DETERMINING SUCCESS

If the total rolled on the dice is greater than the difficulty, the attempt was a success. Ties generally go to the initiator of the action, but certain circumstances dictate otherwise (such as the use of some Special Abilities or determining the amount of damage done). The description of the ability, challenge, or activity explains the results.

Result Points

Result points refer to the difference between the skill roll and the difficulty. The Galaxy Master (GM) can use the result points to decide how well the character completed the task. The Galaxy Master (GM) may allow a player to add one-half of the result points (rounded up) as a bonus to another skill roll or *Metaphysics* or Special Ability effect. One-fifth of the result points from an attack roll can be included as bonus to damage. (Round fractions up.)

Result Points and Success

Here are some guidelines for describing different levels of success. Use the result points of the roll — the difference between the skill total and the difficulty — to decide on the exact level.

Minimal (0): The total was just barely enough. The character hardly succeeded at all, and only the most minimal effects apply. If “minimal effects” are not an option, then maybe the action took longer than normal to succeed.

Solid (1-4): The action was performed completely, but without frills.

Good (5-8): The results were better than necessary and there may be added benefits.

Superior (9-12): It is almost certain that there are additional benefits to performing an action this well. The character performed the action better, faster, or more adeptly than expected.

Spectacular (13-16): The performance of the action was deft and expert. Observers would notice the ease or grace with which the action was performed (if applicable).

Incredible (16 or more): The skill performance was of such dazzling quality that, if appropriate to the task, it could become the subject of conversation for some time — it’s at least worth writing home about. Galaxy Master (GM)s should dole out some significant bonuses for getting this large of a roll.

Example: A character who is trying to use the survival skill to forage for food gets a minimal success — she finds “subsistence level” food; it’s barely better than garbage. The next day she gets a spectacular result — not only does she find good, wholesome food, but she finds enough for two days instead of one.

Second Chances

As characters tackle obstacles, they’ll find ones that they can’t overcome initially. Galaxy Master (GM)s

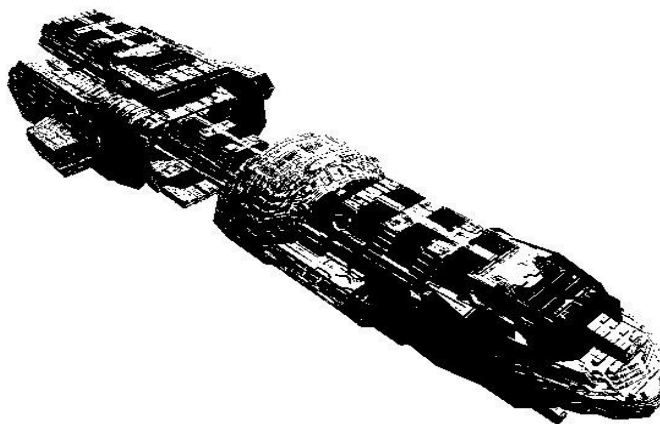
must rely on their judgment to decide whether and when a character may try an action again. For some actions, such as firearms or running, the character may try the action again the next turn, even if she failed. For other actions, such as *Repair* (any kind) or *Persuasion*, failing the roll should have serious consequences, depending on how bad the failure was. A small difference between the difficulty number and the success total means the character may try again next round at a higher difficulty. A large difference means that the character has made the situation significantly worse. She will need to spend more time thinking through the problem or find someone or something to assist her in her endeavor. A large difference plus a Critical Failure could mean that the character has created a disaster. She can't try that specific task for a long time — perhaps ever. This is especially true with locks and computer programs.

Galaxy Master (GM)'s Fiat

The rules are a framework upon which the Galaxy Master (GM)s and their friends build stories set in fantastic and dynamic worlds. As with most frameworks, the rules work best when they show the least, and when can bend under stress. Keeping to the letter of the rules is almost certainly counterproductive to the whole idea of making an engaging story and having fun. To keep a story flowing with a nice dramatic beat, Galaxy Master (GM)s might need to bend the rules, such as reducing the significance of a modifier in this situation but not in another one, or allowing a character to travel a meter or two beyond what the movement rules suggest.

Common Difficulties and Modifiers

You can find the more commonly referenced difficulties listed on the Reference Sheet at the back of this book. With these plus the generic difficulties and modifiers described previously, you can run about any adventure. The next several chapters include more, and more detailed, difficulties.



Colonial battleships typically carry heavy beam armaments in addition to multiple TMD launchers giving them a significant fleet bombardment capability.

CHAPTER 8: MOVEMENT

WHAT'S IN THIS CHAPTER

Getting from here to there by any means- running, swimming, flying, using a vehicle, you name it- is what this chapter's all about.

Running

The Difficulty to cover rapidly a distance on foot is determined by the number of extra movements the character takes. One movement equals the character's Move value; two movements equals twice the Move value, and so on. For each movement beyond the first, add 5 to the base Difficulty of zero.

Example: A character with a Move of 10 meters per round who wants to move 20 meters in one round has a running Difficulty of 5, while a character who wants to move 40 meters has a Difficulty of 15.

A character who fails his running roll in the first round covers only his Move or may even trip, depending on how badly the player missed the roll. See the "Accelerating and Decelerating" section for details on what happens in subsequent rounds.

Swimming

A hero's swimming Move equals half his normal Move (rounded up). One movement while swimming equals the swimming Move, two movements equals twice the swimming Move, and so on. Increasing this rate likewise increases the base Difficulty of 5 by +5 for each movement beyond the first. Thus, the Difficulty for a character to move 2 times his swimming speed is 10 (5 for the base Difficulty plus 5 for the additional movement).

Without preparation, a character may hold his breath for a number of seconds equal to 5 times a roll of his *Strength* or *Stamina*. Pre-oxygenating his lungs gives a character a bonus. The maximum any character can hold his breath with preparation is 10 times a roll of his stamina in seconds, though this requires having the stamina skill. The bonus should be much less for the average person.

Climbing

Characters who have the *Climb/Jump* skill can move up a surface at their normal Move (barring adverse environmental factors) with a base Difficulty of 5. Those without such a skill move at half their normal movement rate. Increasing the rate increases the Difficulty by +10 for each additional one-half of the base climbing Move (rounded up).

Example: A character with a running Move of 10 and without the climb/jump skill wants to move quickly up a tree. His base climbing Move is 5. To increase this to eight meters per round means a Difficulty of 15 (5 to climb the tree plus +10 to increase the movement by one-half, or three meters, of his base climbing Move).

Additional modifiers can be found in the "Example Skill Difficulties" chapter.

Jumping

A character's total leaping distance (vertically and horizontally) from a standing position equals one-quarter of his Move in meters (rounded up). The base Difficulty is 5 to move this distance, and +10 for each additional two meters (vertically and horizontally) the character hopes to cover. If there is enough room, the character may try running before jumping. The character may add 5 to his skill total per round of the running start; up to a maximum of +10 (two rounds). The character must have beat the running Difficulty in both rounds in order to get the full bonus.

Additional modifiers can be found in the "Example Skill Difficulties" chapter.

Flying Characters

Characters who fly do so at the base rate designated in the Special Ability or equipment description. To increase this rate, use the same rules as for running, except that the character relies on the *Flying/0-G* skill. Characters may not use this skill unless they have a means of propelling themselves through the air or they are in a zero-gravity environment.

See the "Vehicles and Aerial Characters" section later in this chapter for more details on flying movement.

Short Distances

A character may move up to 50% of his movement rate (swimming, flying, or base Move) without this counting as an action. Thus, a character with a base Move of 10 could move five meters on land or 2.5 meters in the water with no action penalty.

Maximum Movement

Characters may perform only one movement action of each type per round, unless a Special Ability allows them to do otherwise.

Galaxy Master (GM)s may choose to limit the speed at which characters may travel to 4 times the Move rate for each type of movement.

Accelerating and Decelerating

When it becomes important to the scenario, such as a race or a chase scene, the Galaxy Master (GM) may choose to include acceleration and deceleration rules for running, swimming, and flying characters.

A character may increase his current movement rate by up to 2 times that rate, regardless of whether his movement roll would allow him to travel a greater distance. The maximum increase is 2 times the character's base Move for that type of movement.

Example: A character with a base walking Move of 10 has a maximum swimming change of 10- 2 times his swimming Move of 5.

Example: A character with a Move of 10 is chasing a thief, who just swiped her cred-key lanyard. In the first

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round, she may move up to 20 meters, which has a running Difficulty of 5. In the second round, she can increase her speed to 40 meters, which has a running Difficulty of 15. If, in the second round, the player generates a running total of 20, by the acceleration rules, she may only move 40 meters, even though her running total meets the Difficulty to move 50 meters.

Similarly, if a character does not make a movement roll that would allow him to move at the previous round's rate, that character automatically slows by 2 times his base Move. (The Galaxy Master (GM) may lower the movement even more if the player rolled particularly poorly.) In other words, subtract 2 times the base Move from the current movement rate to get the new movement rate. If this makes the current movement zero, then the character stops. If it's less than zero, the character trips.

Example: The character chasing the thief increased her speed to a rate of 40 meters per round. To maintain this speed, her player needs to continue generating a total of 15 with the character's running skill. If the player gets less than 15, then her character's speed drops to 20 meters per round (40 minus 2 times her base Move of 10).

Characters traveling more than 4 times their base movement rate must slow down gradually or risk hurting themselves by stopping suddenly.

Movement Difficulty Modifiers

Base Difficulty for Characters: 0 (running); 5 (other movement)

Situation

Modifier

Easy terrain (flat surface, smooth water, using a ladder, light breeze, light rain or fog)

0

Moderate terrain (uneven surface, small obstacles, choppy water, climbing a tree, strong winds, heavy rain or fog)

5

Rough terrain (large but negotiable obstacles, strong undercurrent, climbing a rough wall, flying near obstacles such as pillars or trees)

10

Very rough terrain (dense and large obstacles, stormy weather, a few airborne hazards, hail)

15

Hazardous terrain (minefield, narrow walkway, many airborne hazards, large waves, climbing a smooth surface, complete darkness)

20

Very hazardous terrain (corridor filled with falling debris and explosions, swimming or flying in a hurricane)

+25 or more

Fatigue

Keep in mind that most characters cannot move rapidly for long periods of time. Determine a suitable length of time depending on existing conditions, the Strength of the character, and any relevant Special Abilities she has. Any additional fast movement beyond that predetermined length requires a fatigue modifier of +3 to the Difficulty for each additional round that she continues running. The modifier is cumulative. Thus, one round beyond the maximum is +3, two rounds is +6, and so on.

The Galaxy Master (GM) may use the fatigue modifier for any repetitive action performed for an extended period of time. They can also use it as the modifier to a base Difficulty of 5 when using the stamina or willpower skill in an attempt to overcome the fatigue.

Other Movement Options

The Galaxy Master (GM) may include additional modifiers or require an additional related skill roll for any form of movement, depending on surrounding conditions, such as high winds, numerous obstacles, slick surfaces, sharp turns, and so on.

VEHICLES AND AERIAL CHARACTERS

Vehicle actions work like normal character actions, with some additional game mechanics for special situations.

Much of the information found in this section applies equally well to flying characters, particularly the details on stunts.

Vehicle Movement

Vehicles have five speeds of movement: stopped, cautious, cruising, high, and all-out. They may make one movement action per round.

Stopped: The vehicle is motionless. This requires no roll. Air vehicles should be on the ground when at this speed level.

Cautious: The vehicle travels at half its Move. This is generally a free action requiring no roll, but terrain conditions may increase it from its base Difficulty of zero. Air vehicles at this level must be attempting to reach a higher or lower altitude at this speed; they cannot maintain altitude at cautious.

Cruising: The vehicle travels at its Move. This requires an action, but since it has a base Difficulty of zero, the character need only roll if movement conditions dictate otherwise.

High: The vehicle travels at twice its Move. This requires an exoskeleton operation, piloting, or vehicle operation roll with a base Difficulty of 5, modified by existing conditions.

All-out: The vehicle travels at four times its Move. This requires an exoskeleton operation, piloting, or vehicle operation roll with a base Difficulty of 10, modified by existing conditions.

Vehicles may travel anywhere between half their current speed and the full current speed at each level. Rapid acceleration and deceleration are considered stunts and dealt with later in this section.

Stunts

For normal vehicle use or casual flying under ideal conditions, a character need not make a skill roll. When the conditions turn less than favorable or he decides to attempt a fancy maneuver, his exoskeleton operation, piloting, or vehicle operation skill plus the vehicle's *Maneuverability* code or his *Flying/O-G* skill determines his success.

Rapid acceleration and deceleration also warrant rolls, enhanced by the vehicle's *Maneuverability*, to see if the operator maintains control. These maneuvers have an initial Difficulty of 10, adjusted based on existing conditions(see the "*Stunt difficulties and modifiers*" chart for some suggestions). A vehicle or flying character may reduce or increase movement by two levels in one round. Failing this roll means

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that the character has lost control for one round. If some immovable force doesn't stop the vehicle or character during that round, he may attempt to regain control (with a base Difficulty of 15) on the following round.

If a character wishes to perform any other actions in addition to *Exoskeleton Operation*, *Piloting*, *Vehicle Operation*, or *Flying/D-G*, he must make the appropriate skill rolls for all actions, reduced by the multi-action penalty, regardless of the situation. The base Difficulty for normal operation becomes 5. Stunts still have their established base difficulties.

Stunt Difficulties/Modifiers

Condition	Modifier
Docking (water), parking in a specific spot (land)	6
Landing (air vehicles)	10
Moving on a straight way	0
Regaining control*	15
Sideswiping	10
Easy turn (less than 45 degrees)	5
Fast 45-degree turn	9
Fast 90-degree turn	15

* In situations other than ramming or sideswiping.

Condition Modifier

For All Vehicles

Condition	Modifier
Moving in reverse	+6
Ramming	+10

For Land and Water Vehicles

Condition	Modifier
Moved or moving over curb or debris	+6
Ramming	+10

For Land Vehicles Not Designed for Off-Road Conditions

Condition	Modifier
Off-road	+6

For Air Vehicles and Aerial Characters

Condition	Modifier
Unlimited landing area	-3
Limited landing area	+3
Almost no landing area	+6
Rough or unsteady landing area	+3 or more
Climb or dive of 45 degrees or more	+6 or more

Terrain Conditions

For modifiers due to various terrain conditions, use the “*Movement Difficulty Modifiers*” table.

Vehicle Familiarity

Use the following table when a character is not familiar with the vehicle she needs to operate. If the character does not have the correct operating skill at all, these difficulties are in addition to the untrained modifier.

Vehicle Type	Modifier
Very common or simple (car, pickup, bicycle)	+3
Common (farm tractor, motorcycle, motorboat, snowmobile)	+6
Moderately common (speedboat, bus)	+8
Uncommon (ultralight plane, tank, hang-glider, unicycle)	+11
Unusual (prop plane, glider)	+14
Rare (jet, submarine)	+17
Exotic (spaceship, powered armor)	+20
Has a manual for the vehicle*	-3

* in a language the character can understand

Ramming and Sideswiping Vehicles

Ramming is done with the nose of a vehicle, while sideswiping is done with its side. The character makes the appropriate vehicle roll, including the vehicle’s *Maneuverability*. If the character fails the roll, the vehicle misses and spins. Land and vehicles turn up to 180 degrees and lose power, while space vehicles continuing spinning. The character must then spend one round starting it or regaining control and another getting back in the right direction. Should the character instead succeed, she keeps the vehicle reasonably straight and may try for another sideswipe or ram on the next turn. The pilot of an air vehicle that rams or sideswipes another vehicle automatically loses control. About the best she can hope for is to make a successful, but rough, landing.

Both vehicles take damage (the mechanics of this are explained later in this section) in a successful ram or sideswipe.

Vehicle Attacking and Dodging

The base Difficulty to hit a vehicle is 10, modified by distance and the sizes of the attacker and the defender (using the scale modifier listed in the “*Combat Options*” chapter). That means a person shooting a car has a +6 to his attack total, while a car sideswiping another car has no modifier.

If the driver wishes to fire a small-arms weapon, he must make both an Easy exoskeleton operation, piloting, or vehicle operation roll (modified by the vehicle’s *Maneuverability* code) and a firearms roll. Because he’s doing two actions, he also incurs a multi-action penalty to both rolls. Drivers cannot generally fire vehicle-mounted weapons while maneuvering the vehicle. Passengers may shoot with few or no penalties. (Note that these actions would not be possible in some vehicles.)

A character may also attempt to maneuver the vehicle out of the way of incoming projectiles or other vehicles. Instead of the dodge skill, the character uses his exoskeleton operation, piloting, or vehicle

operation skill plus the vehicle's Maneuverability code. Use the active partial or full defense rules for characters to determine the new defense total. The defense total becomes the new combat Difficulty and is in effect until the character's turn in the next round.

Vehicle Damage

When a vehicle takes damage from a weapon or another vehicle, it's the level of destruction that matters. Use the following guidelines and compare the result to the "Vehicle and Passenger Damage" chart.

Modify the damage total of the attacker or the damage resistance total of the target by the scale modifier, as appropriate for the situation.

A vehicle's damage resistance total equals its Toughness plus the value of any armor. Character Points or Fate Points may not be spent on this roll.

With weapons, compare the weapon's damage total to the target's damage resistance total, including the scale modifier for the vehicle (if the Galaxy Master (GM) uses that option).

When a vehicle collides with something else, decide how fast it was going when it made the collision and modify it based on the circumstances of the collision. Compare that to the damage resistance total. Should two vehicles be involved, both take damage. See the sidebar for the speed and collision modifiers.

Crew and Passenger Injuries

Depending on how badly damaged the vehicle becomes, the crew and passengers may be harmed, too. Use the "Passengers Suffer" column of the "Vehicle and Passenger Damage" chart as a guideline. Adjust it based on how much the passengers are exposed (for example, motorcycles and canoes offer little protection to their cargo).

Vehicle and Passenger Damage

Damage Total > Resistance Total By	Vehicle Damage	Passengers Suffer...
1-3	Very Light	No damage
4-8	Light	1/4 Damage Total
9-12	Heavy	1/2 Damage Total
13-15	Severe	3/4 Damage Total
16+	Destroyed	All Damage Total

Note: All modifiers are cumulative. A vehicle may take an unlimited number of Very Light and Light levels of damage. At Heavy or above, any additional level of damage above Very Light bumps the damage to the next level.

Galaxy Master (GM)s may include or substitute damage to other systems if the vehicle has them (ex., weapons, navigation, or sensors).

Very Light: Vehicle loses 1D from *Maneuverability* for this round and the next.

Light: Vehicle loses 1D from *Maneuverability* or, if at 0D in *Maneuverability*, top move speed is decreased by one level. The loss or modifier remains until repaired.

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Heavy: Vehicle loses 2D from *Maneuverability* or, if at 0D in *Maneuverability*, top move speed is decreased by two levels. The loss or modifier remains until repaired.

Severe: Vehicle is out of control, decelerating by two levels each round until it comes to a stop or crashes into something.

Destroyed: The vehicle will never operate again.

Speed Damage Modifier

Level*	Damage
Stopped	2D
Cautious	4D
Cruise	6D
High	8D
All-out	10D

*Level at which the damaged vehicle is traveling.

Collision Damage Modifier

Situation	Modifier
Head-on	+3D
Rear-end, sideswipe	-3D
Nose to side	+0
Into something very hard	+0
Into something yielding	-1D or more

Note: Modifiers are cumulative. Situation is the one in which the damaged vehicle is.

Leaping Out of a Vehicle

Leaving a land or water vehicle moving at less than 10 kilometers per hour is a Very Easy *Acrobatics* or *Agility* roll (or climb/jump if the character leaps from the vehicle). If the vehicle is moving faster than that, the base Difficulty becomes 15, with +1 added to it for every 10 kilometers per hour the vehicle is traveling (rounded down). Additionally, the character takes damage from the fall, at a rate of 1 for every 15 kilometers per hour the vehicle is moving (rounded up) minus the result points from the roll.

Example: If the driver of a car traveling at 90 kilometers per hour decided to leave the vehicle before it hit the tree it was traveling toward, the Difficulty would be 24 ($90/10 = 9$, plus the base Difficulty of 15). She would also take 6 points of damage unless she sufficiently succeeded at her jump ($90/15 = 6$).

Repairing a Vehicle

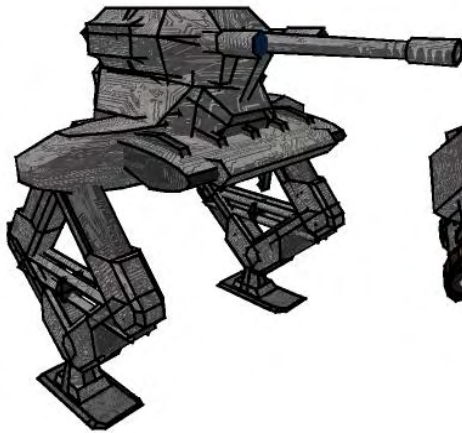
The Difficulty to repair a damaged vehicle depends on the amount of damage and availability of parts and tools. See the repair category description in the "Example Skill difficulties" chapter for Difficulty and modifier suggestions.

Sample Vehicles

See the "Equipment" section in *Astral Empires: Interstellar Arsenal* for sample planetary vehicles, their costs, and their game characteristics.



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CHAPTER 9: COMBAT

What's in this Chapter

This chapter provides an extended description of one of the most rules-intensive aspects of roleplaying: combat. You are also free to use one of the dedicated Astral Empires starship combat systems, such as *Astral Empires: Galactic Command*, specifically created for fighting out battles of the 10,000 AD era.

When resolving a situation calls for force, time becomes broken into rounds, which were discussed in the "Rounds and Initiative" section of the "Game Basics" chapter. Within these rounds, three steps occur:

1. Generating initiative;
2. Attacking and defending;
3. Determining damage;
4. Repeating the steps, if necessary.

Discover herein what happens in each of those steps.

Step 1: Generating Initiative

As discussed in the "Game Basics" chapter, determine initiative based on the first significant action or on initiative rolls. Then go on to Step 2.

Step 2: Attacking and Defending

This is where the interesting stuff happens. The person whose turn it is gets to decide what type of action her character is going to do. Once she chooses, she makes a skill roll.

Note that a character need not attempt to engage in combat, but this chapter only discusses what to do if the player decides to attack, defend, or do both (typically with a multi-action penalty).

Base Combat Difficulty

The base Difficulty to attack someone is 10 (called the target's passive defense value) or the target's active defense total, modified by range and other factors.

Active Defense

The target character can opt to use an *Active Defense*, which affects all attacks that occur after the defender's turn in the current round but before the defender's turn the next round. Active defenses are defensive maneuvers that the target consciously exercises, such as dodging, blocking, or parrying. Each of these is represented by a skill and counts as an action.

A character may make an active defense only when his turn comes up in the initiative line, but the total for the roll is effective for all relevant attacks made against the character that occur after the character's

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current turn but before his turn in the next round.

Remember: if a character acts later in a round than his attacker, he cannot take his turn sooner and use an active defense to replace the passive defense value- his reactions just weren't fast enough.

If the roll is lower than the passive defense value, the character has succeeded in making himself easier to hit- by miscalculating where the attack would be placed and actually getting in its way.

The active defense total is modified as the situation dictates.

Dodge: The character attempts to anticipate the final location of an attack from any source and be in another place when it comes. This is done by rolling the *Dodge* skill.

Block/Parry: The character attempts to stop his opponent's attack by intercepting it and either stopping it with a block or deflecting it with a parry. The character may roll his *Brawling* or *Melee Combat* (if he has something in his hands) to block it. If the character uses a sharp or energized weapon (sword or dagger, for example) to parry an unarmed blow and is successful at the block, the attacker takes damage from the weapon. However, do not add the defender's *Strength* to the listed weapon damage score when determining injuries inflicted this way.

If the opponent strikes at the character with a bladed or energized hand weapon and the character uses any part of his body to intercept the attack, the defender always takes the weapon's damage total. If the block was successful, then the attacker's Strength Damage is not added to the listed score. If the block was unsuccessful, then the target character takes damage as normal. The character may avoid this aspect by having armor, a special ability, or a suitable close combat specialization in melee parry.

Full Defense

A character who forgoes all of her actions for a round to completely protect herself from attacks makes a full defense. The total rolled by the skill plus 10 takes the place of the base combat Difficulty from the time the character makes the full defense on her turn to her turn in the next round.

Full active defense value = any active defense skill roll + 10

Partial Defense

A character who chooses to do something else in addition to guarding against attacks may take a partial defense. In this case, the active defense roll replaces the base combat Difficulty from the time the character takes his turn in one round to his turn in the next round.

Partial active defense value = any active defense skill roll

Since the character is taking multiple actions, the multi-action penalty applies.

The Galaxy Master (GM) may call for a partial defense roll (as a free action) if he decides that the character might have a little awareness of an impending attack, yet not enough foresight to prepare for it.

Optional Passive Defense modifier

For every 2D in *Agility* or *Dodge* above 4D (round up), a character receives a +1 to her passive defense value. This modifier does not affect the character's active defense total. Every six ranks in a *Skill Bonus*

or *Increased Attribute Special Ability* that affects *Agility* or *Dodge* provides a +1 bonus, as specified for the skill in question.

Example: A character with 4D in *Agility* gets no bonus, while a character with 7D in *Acrobatics* has a +2 bonus.

Combat Difficulty Modifiers

Here are a few of the most frequently used modifiers to the combat Difficulty. Others are discussed in “*Combat Options*” chapter. Regardless of the number of modifiers used, the total combat Difficulty may never go below 3.

The Galaxy Master (GM) rolls the indicated modifier and adds it to the combat situation. A standard modifier is included in parentheses after the die modifier, should the Galaxy Master (GM) prefer not to roll.

Range

The effectiveness of a punch, weapon, Special Ability, or any other attack made at a distance depends on its range. All range modifiers are added or subtracted from the combat Difficulty.

Note that, unless a special maneuver allows otherwise, characters may use unarmed close combat attacks at Point Blank range only. In most cases, this is true for using various melee weapons as well, though the distance can be increased to Short range if the weapon is longer than two meters. For instance, a character with a support beam can whack an opponent at Point Blank or Short range.

Range Table

Distance to Target	Modifier
Point Blank 0-3 meters	-5
Short 3 meters to first value*	+0
Medium First to second value*	+5
Long Second to third value*	+10

*Values refer to values given in the weapon's range listing.

Estimating Ranges

Galaxy Master (GM)s who aren't interested in looking up weapon ranges and figuring out the distance to the target can estimate what modifiers to use with these guidelines.

- A target within a few steps of the attacker is a Point Blank range.
- An attacker firing a rifle at a target across a rather large chamber shoots at Short range, while an attacker with a handgun shoots the same target at Medium range.
- Most projectile combat taking place outdoors is at Medium to Long range.

Cover

When a target is protected by something- poor lighting, smoke, fog, a table- it makes her harder to hit. This is represented by a cover modifier, which is added to the combat Difficulty.

Cover Table

Situation	Modifier
Light smoke/fog	+1D (+3)
Thick smoke/fog	+2D (+6)
Very thick smoke/fog	+4D (+12)
Poor light, twilight	+1D (+3)
Moonlit night	+2D (+6)
Complete darkness	+4D (+12)
Object hides 25% of target	+1D (+3)
Object hides 50% of target	+2D (+6)
Object hides 75% of target	+4D (+12)
Object hides 100% of target	*

* If cover offers protection, the attacker cannot hit the target directly, but damage done to the cover might exceed the Armor Value it provides, and, indirectly, damage the target. Most of the time, the attacker must eliminate the cover before having a chance to hit the target.

Aiming

Aiming involves careful tracking of the target. Characters may perform it against moving targets, but they cannot themselves do anything else in the round in which they aim. Each consecutive round of uninterrupted aiming add 1D to the character's *Firearms*, *Gunnery*, *Missile Weapons*, or *Throwing* skill, up to a maximum bonus of +3D.

Determining Success

Once the combat Difficulty has been determined, the attacker rolls the die code in his character's combat skill and compares the total to the combat Difficulty. If it equals or exceeds the combat Difficulty, the attack hits, probably doing damage or having another effect that the attacker intended. If it was less than the combat Difficulty, then the attack misses.

Step 3: Determining Damage

If a character successfully hits his target, he may have done damage to it. To determine the amount of injury caused, roll the damage die code for the weapon, including any modifiers from a special combat action, such as a sweep attack or hit location. Some weapons list their score as a die code with a plus sign ("+") in front of it; in this case, add the damage die code to the attacker's Strength Damage die code, add modifiers, and roll. If the Galaxy Master (GM) chooses to use the optional damage bonus, this is added to the total at this time.

After the player or the Galaxy Master (GM) has figured out how much damage is done, go to the *Damage* chapter on pages 75 - 77 to determine how much of that damage the target sustained.

Determining Strength Damage

To figure the Strength Damage die code, drop the pips from the character's *Strength* or *Lift* die code (but include any relevant Disadvantages or Special Abilities), divide the number by 2, and round up. The *Increased Attribute: Strength* Special Ability affects the total.

Example: A character with 3D in Strength has a Strength Damage of 2D. A character with 6D+2 in lift has a Strength Damage of 3D.

Optional Damage Bonus

The combat skill roll is supposed to reflect the accuracy of an attack. Therefore, Galaxy Master (GM)s may reward high rolls for players' characters and significant Galaxy Master (GM) characters with a bonus to damage. Subtract the Difficulty of the successful attack from the skill total and divide this number by 5, rounding up. Add this damage bonus to the damage total before comparing it to the resistance total. If the Galaxy Master (GM) uses the damage bonus in combination with a called-shot hit location, the bonus is in

Step 4: Repeat

If the fight isn't finished after one round, then return to Step 1 in the "Combat" chapter and do it all over again. Repeat these steps until the fight is resolved in favor of one side or the other.

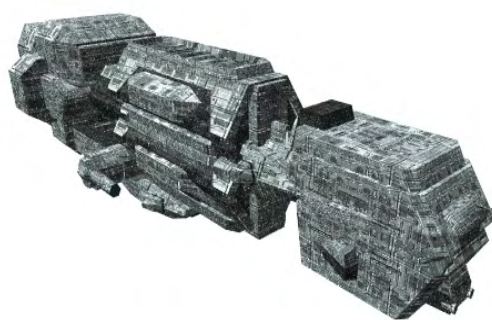
Non-character Combat

When characters use exoskeletons or vehicles, the basic combat rules are the same; the difference exists in which skill to use. Vehicles, except exoskeletons, cannot block or parry. The driver may only make defensive maneuvers appropriate for the vehicle (generally *Dodge*); he uses his *Exoskeleton Operation*, *Piloting*, or *Vehicle Operation* plus the vehicle's Maneuverability rating to determine the new combat difficulty. Exoskeleton (or mecha) operators may dodge, block, or parry, but these all use the *Exoskeleton Operation* skill.

Similarly, when attacking with a vehicle- or exoskeleton mounted weapon, the character uses *Gunnery*. Ramming or sideswiping with a vehicle requires the driver to make an appropriate *Vehicles* roll. To punch, parry, or use a hand-held close combat weapon, an exoskeleton operator relies on his *Exoskeleton Operation* skill.

Combat Summary

You can find a summary of the information in this chapter on the Reference Sheet included in the back of this book.



Despite their inelegant appearance in comparison to earlier generations of Primean warships the current classes of Commonwealth naval ships are quite battleworthy in nearly every respect.

Combat Example

To give you an idea of how all this works, here's a typical exchange between a player's character and one of his opponents.

Galaxy Master (GM): Okay, we're in combat rounds now. Everyone make a *Perception* roll. (All players and the Galaxy Master (GM) roll their dice.) Anyone roll higher than 20?

Dan: Yeah, I rolled a 23!

Galaxy Master (GM): All right, what do you want to do?

Dan: Ah, that depends. What're the mercs doing?

Galaxy Master (GM): As one runs across the repair bay toward you, the other two set up some kind of large, tripod-mounted weapon near the entrance, which is about 15 meters away from you.

Dan: I'm going to take two actions. First, I'll shoot at one of the mercs with my laser rifle, and then I'm going to dodge out of the way.

Galaxy Master (GM): Okay, you lose 10 from each action and you don't get the full defense bonus, since you're taking two actions.

Dan: (Rolls his character's firearms dice.) I rolled a 6 on the Wild Die! (Rolls the Wild Die again.) All right, that's a total of 21!

Galaxy Master (GM): Let's see... he's at Short range, so there's no modifier to the base combat Difficulty of 10. You nailed him! Roll damage.

Dan: (Rolls her rifle's damage dice.) I rolled an 18.

Galaxy Master (GM): (Using the Wounds system, he rolls the merc's *Strength* to resist the damage.) Whoops! I rolled a 1 on the Wild Die. That leaves a total of 2. Well, that's 16 points over the resistance total.. The optional damage bonus adds +2 and brings the total to 18. This definitely puts him at the Dead level! Your rifle shot catches him right in the chest and he's thrown backward into the wall. Okay, now make your dodge roll. (Note that if the Galaxy Master (GM) had decided to use the Body Points system, the merc would not have made a resistance roll, instead taking the full 18 points of damage.)

Dan: (Rolls his character's dodge dice.) Well, I rolled a 13, but something tells me that's not going to be high enough, so I'm going to spend a Character Point.

Galaxy Master (GM): Okay, roll another die and add it.

Dan: (Rolls one more die.) I rolled a 5, so that's a total of 18. I'll stick with that.

Galaxy Master (GM): Okay, the mercs get to go now. The one rushing toward you fires his rifle. (Checks range and then rolls the merc's firearms dice.) That's a 17.

Dan: I rolled an 18 for my dodge this round. Good thing I spent that Character Point!

Galaxy Master (GM): That's right, so the merc's blaster bolt lances straight toward you and you just barely manage to jump out of the way. On to the next one...

Dan: Whew!

CHAPTER 10: DAMAGE

What's in this Chapter

Injury can come from all sides. This chapter describes two methods of figuring out how hurt a character is, plus a few sources of damage other than weapons.

Body Points versus Wound Levels

The Body Points system has the advantage of a gradual fall into death and a more rapid healing process. The Wound levels system brings it on faster and is slower to heal. Which the Galaxy Master (GM) chooses to use depends on how deadly he wants the game.

Furthermore, Galaxy Master (GM)s should feel free to further adjust the deadliness of their games by giving characters more or less Body Points or Wound levels, by adding a modifier to the damage resistance total, or by adjusting the effects of each Wound level.

Damage and Body Points

Once the player or Galaxy Master (GM) has her character's resistance total, subtract the attacker's damage total from the target's damage resistance total and subtract that number from the total Body Points the character has remaining. If the Galaxy Master (GM) chooses, she may compare the number of Body Points the character has remaining to the "Wound Level" table to determine what level of injury the defender sustained and what its effects on the character are.

If the damage resistance total is greater than or equal to the damage total, the defender incurs no injuries (beyond an annoying bruise, a shallow scrape, a light burn, or dinged protective gear).

Damage Resistance Total

The damage resistance total equals a roll of the target character's die codes from armor or Special Abilities (such as *Attack Resistance*) minus any modifiers from disease, ingested poisons, or other debilitating circumstances (such as an appropriate *Hindrance*). A player may improve his character's resistance total by spending Character Points or a Fate Point on this roll.

If the character has no armor or Special Abilities, then the character has a damage resistance total of zero, and the player makes no roll. However, they can still spend Character Points, using them as a base damage resistance total. Spending a Fate Point allows the player to roll his character's *Strength*. Totals determined from spending points are adjusted as normal, including negative and positive damage resistance modifiers.

Stun Damage

For weapons that do stun damage, after the damage total is determined but before applying it, subtract a roll of the target's *Strength* or *Stamina* from the damage total. If the victim suffers at least one point of damage, that character goes unconscious for a number of minutes equal to the difference

between the resistance total and the original damage total.

Equipment that does stun damage only has no effect on inanimate, nonelectrical objects, though it does tend to disrupt electrical components.

Damage and Wound Levels

Once the player or Galaxy Master (GM) has her character's resistance total, compare the damage total to a resistance total on the "Wound Level" table to determine how much injury the defender sustained and what its effects on the character are.

If the damage resistance total is greater than or equal to the damage total, the defender incurs no injuries (beyond an annoying bruise, a shallow scrape, a light burn, or dinged protective gear).

Damage Resistance Total

The resistance total equals the target character's *Strength* plus any bonuses from armor or Special Abilities (such as *Increased Attribute: Strength*) minus any modifiers from disease, ingested poisons, or other debilitating circumstances (such as *Reduced Attribute: Strength* or an appropriate *Hindrance*). Do not include any Wound level modifier when attempting to resist damage. A character also may improve her resistance by spending Character Points or a Fate Point on this roll.

Stun Damage

For weapons that do stun damage, after the number of Wounds have been determined but before applying the level modifiers, reduce the weapon's damage by two Wound levels, with a minimum level of Stunned. The character also goes unconscious for a number of minutes equal to the difference between the resistance total and the damage total.

Equipment that does stun damage only has no effect on inanimate, nonelectrical objects, though it does tend to disrupt electrical components.

Unconsciousness and Death

If the character's Body Points reach a few points or he has attained the Mortally Wounded level but the character wasn't instantly killed by massive damage, he is still gravely injured and falls unconscious. Every round that the character is at this level, his player makes a *Strength* roll against a Difficulty equal to the number of minutes the character has been Mortally Wounded.

Sufficient medical aid to bring the character to at least 10% of his maximum Body Points can possibly rescue the imperiled character. If suitable medical aid is administered within four minutes, the character recovers without undue harm. If the medical aid is given within four to 10 minutes, the player rolls his character's *Strength* or *stamina* against a Difficulty equal to the number of minutes he was Mortally Wounded. If the roll succeeds, the character revives but he loses 1D from all of his skills, though the skill cannot go below the attribute's die code. If the medical aid is given within 10 to 15 minutes, the player rolls his character's *Strength* or *stamina* against a Difficulty equal to the number of minutes he was Mortally Wounded. If the roll succeeds, the character revives but he loses 2D from all of his skills, though no skill can be reduced below the attribute's die code. In any case, should the roll fail, the character dies.

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Characters who receive their total Body Points in additional damage after reaching zero Body Points cannot be revived (by normal means, anyway).

Galaxy Master (GM)s who prefer a more rapid exit out of the mortal coil may ignore these rules, instead declaring that once the character reaches the Dead level or zero Body Points, the character is history.

Wound Levels

	<i>Wounds*</i> Damage Total ≥ Effect Resistance Total By:	<i>Body Points†</i> Body Points Left
Wound Levels		
Stunned	1–3	80% – 60%
Wounded	4–8	59% – 40%
Severely Wounded	4–8**	39% – 20%
Incapacitated	9–12	19% – 10%
Mortally Wounded	13–15	1% – 9%
Dead	16 or more	0

***Note:** Any additional damage less than the character's current level moves the character up by one level.

****A character is moved to the Severely Wounded level if the difference is between 4 and 8 and she already has the Wounded level.**

†Note: This is an optional chart for those using Body Points. The "Body Points Left" column is based on the character's maximum Body Points. Round so that there is no overlap between levels.

Penalties imposed by each level are not cumulative and they are not included when determining the stun or damage resistance total or any total not involving a skill or attribute.

Stunned: Either receives -1D for all remaining actions this round and next round or may only defend or retreat in the next round.

Wounded: -1D to all actions until healed.

Severely Wounded: -2D on all actions until healed.

Incapacitated: The character is severely injured. As a free action before losing consciousness, he may try to stay up with a Moderate (15) *Stamina* or *Willpower* roll. If the character succeeds, he may continue to act, but all actions have a -3D penalty. If he fails, he is knocked out for 10D minutes.

Mortally Wounded: The character is near death and knocked unconscious with no chance to keep up. Roll the character's Strength each round, the character finally dies if the roll is less than the number of minutes he's been at this level.

Dead: The character is toast. Sorry.

Fast Combat Option: Galaxy Master (GM)s who wish to give the players' characters and their major opponents an edge in battles, make the game more realistic, or simply save themselves trouble should apply the modifiers in the first round of combat and then reassess the levels after combat is complete.

Damage Optional Rules

Miscellaneous Damage

Here is a small selection of various other harmful things that players may encounter during their adventures. Generally, no attack roll is necessary for any of these to affect a character, though a such roll would be required if a person could somehow attack with it. The Galaxy Master (GM) determines what, if any, benefit armor and similar protection provides.

Some equipment may even increase the damage! Damage is otherwise determined as per the combat rules. Except falling, all damage is done per round of close contact. The Galaxy Master (GM) may decide that certain types in certain situations also affect characters at a distance.

Type	Damage
Botulism (severe case)	4D
Cold (extreme)	1D
Cyanide (fatal dose)	8D+2
Electricity (standard wall outlet)	1D
Electricity (major power line)	9D
Falling (for fall of 3 meters or more)	1D per 1.5 meters
Fire (torch-size)	1D
Hydrochloric acid (undiluted, any amount)	2D+1
Radiation (intense)	3D

Descriptive Damage

So a character is down by a few Body Points or has a couple of Wound levels - so what? What does that mean in descriptive terms? It depends on what caused the harm. The following list supplies some general guidelines for describing what might have happened to the character's body when he was hurt. Use the "Wound Levels" chart to decide on the character's current Wound level.

Stunned: Moderate bruise or minor sprain; laceration; muscle tear; minor dislocation of joint.

Wounded: Severe abrasion or sprain; deep laceration; torn ligaments; major dislocation or minor break.

Severely Wounded: Broken bone; gaping wound; ripped cartilage and muscle; concussion.

Incapacitated: Multiple fracture; laceration in vital area; heavy concussion.

Mortally Wounded: Above options combined with multiple internal injuries.

Dead: Broken neck; punctured lung; eviscerated.

These are just a few examples. Really interested Galaxy Master (GM)s can come up with charts, tables, or detailed descriptions of damage for those players who absolutely must know. The Galaxy Master (GM) may also assign different modifiers than the general ones listed in the "Wound Levels" sidebar that more appropriately indicate the type of injury that was suffered.

Adjusting the Deadliness

Changing the Body Points system is fairly obvious: More Body Points lead to longer character life spans, while fewer points bring about the end quicker. Altering the Wound level system is a little more involved and can be handled in a few different ways.

Galaxy Master (GM)s who want to add Wound levels may include additional versions of the same level, similar to the way Wounded and Severely Wounded are handled currently.

Alternatively, they may add additional levels between each one by spreading out the points currently needed to reach each level, or even add further point levels between Mortally Wounded and Dead.

Galaxy Master (GM)s who wish to remove Wound levels may include the lower limit of a deleted level in the next level up or the upper limit in the next level down. Or they may simply take levels out of the bottom and shift all remaining levels down.

Damage and Galaxy Master (GM) Characters

To reflect the average Galaxy Master (GM)'s character's relative unimportance to the universe, Galaxy Master (GM)s may wish to lower their Body Points or Wounds. For pure cannon fodder any damage over a roll of their Strength might cause them to keel over, while the main villain and her most important lieutenants should get the full complement.

Negative Damage Resistance Total

It is possible for the damage resistance total to be a negative number. Metaphysical feedback, Disadvantages, poisons, and sickness can all contribute negative modifiers that might take the damage resistance total below zero. In this case, the character's body is working against him, compounding the additional damage done. Galaxy Master (GM)s have three options for handling this: (1) They may use the negative damage resistance total as a positive bonus to all difficulties until the character is healed. (2) They may have the negative damage resistance total add positively to the amount of injury caused. This is a good method for simulating gritty adventures, as well as a way of getting low-level Galaxy Master (GM)'s characters out of the way. (3) Have the damage resistance total equal zero. This last way works best for adventures of the comic book or action flick types.

Massive Damage Option

If a character incurs two Wound levels within a single round, not only do the normal modifiers for the greatest level apply, the character also can do nothing but defend or run away on the next two rounds. In either of these rounds, the character may make an Easy *Stamina* or *Willpower* attempt, as an action, to try to recover from the blow and shake off the penalty. If this is declared as a multi-action for the round, then the character takes the multi-action penalty. If not, and the *Stamina* or *Willpower* roll is successful, the character may act as normal in the next round.

Killing Blow Option

An attack or series of attacks can cause enough injury that the target may never recover from the harm except through metaphysical or other extraordinary or supernatural measures. Called a killing

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blow, targets with Body Points must take a damage total equal to 91% of the character's maximum Body Points in one blow or 100% of the character's maximum Body Points in a single round. With Wound Levels, the killing blow entails a Mortally Wounded result with one blow or gaining the Dead level in a single round. In either case, use the damage total after subtracting the damage resistance total to determine whether the attack delivered a killing blow. When the target receives a killing blow, he immediately dies.



Chapter 11: Healing

What's in this Chapter

There are many different ways that characters can regain their health. Characters may never get back more than their maximum number of Body Points or Wounds.

Body Points

Natural Healing

The body heals naturally during the course of the day. The more rest characters get, the faster their wounds heal. Using the "Body Points Healing" chart, the character rolls her *Strength* plus any appropriate Special Abilities or Disadvantages and a modifier based on how much rest she's had that day. A character gets a modifier of +1D on each full day of rest (sleeping, reading, or other sedentary activities). If she is involved in light activity, such as walking or singing, the modifier is zero. However, if most of the day is spent fighting and running, the modifier is -1D. The character receives the Body Points back at the beginning of the next day.

Optionally, the Galaxy Master (GM) may require an injured character to complete a period of rest before making the natural healing roll. Use the "Rest Period" chart and the character's Wound level to determine how long the character needs to wait before attempting the natural healing roll. The Galaxy Master (GM) then multiplies the result by 3 to figure out how many Body Points were healed.

Skill

Characters can heal others or themselves with some basic field procedures for treating wounds. Such attempts don't require a medical kit. Simply roll medicine to help an injured comrade, and find the results on the "Body Points Healing" chart. A successful roll heals the character the listed amount. A character using a medical kit may add its bonus to the roll.

A character may only attempt to heal a patient once per day. Other characters may also try to help the patient, adding their expertise to the first healer's.

Body Points Healing

Medicine or Strength Total	Body Points Recovered
0	0
1-5	2
6-10	1D
11-15	2D
16-20	3D
21-25	4D
26-30	5D
30+	6D

Wounds

Natural Healing

A character can heal naturally, but this process is slow. The character must rest a specified amount of time and then can make a natural healing roll: roll the character's full Strength plus any appropriate Special Abilities or Disadvantages. Then find the result on the chart related to the character's current Wound level to see if the character heals.

Healing characters can do virtually nothing but rest. Characters who try to work, exercise, or adventure must subtract 1D from their Strength when they makes their natural healing roll. Any character who opts to take it easy and do virtually nothing for twice the necessary time may add 1D to the *Strength* roll to heal.

Rest Period

Level of Wound	Rest Period
Stunned*	1 minute
Wounded	3 days
Severely Wounded	3 days
Incapacitated	2 weeks
Mortally Wounded	5 weeks

*Those using Body Points should use this level for characters who have no Wound level.

Rest Period Example

A character at the Stunned Wound level may make a natural healing roll for Body Points or heal the Stunned level once she's rested for a minute. After recovering, should the character get to the Stunned level again, the character may make another natural healing attempt after the minute of rest. However, if the character moves to the Wounded level, she may not make her natural healing roll until she's rested for three days.

Skill

Characters can heal others or themselves with some basic field procedures for treating wounds. Such attempts don't require a medical kit. Simply roll medicine to treat wounds in the field, and find the results on the Assisted Healing chart.

A successful roll heals the character up one level: for instance, a successful *Medicine* roll on someone who's Wounded would bring him back to Stunned. A character using a medical kit may add its bonus to the roll.

A character may only attempt to heal a patient once per day. Other characters may also try to help the patient, adding their expertise to the first healer's.

Wounds Healing Tables

Natural Healing

Stunned

A stunned wound is automatically recovered after one minute (12 rounds) of complete rest.

Wounded

Strength Roll Result

Critical Failure Character worsens to Severely Wounded.

2-5 Character remains Wounded.

6+ Character is fully healed.

Severely Wounded

Strength Roll Result

Critical Failure Character worsens to Incapacitated.

2-5 Character remains Severely Wounded.

6+ Character improves to Wounded.

Incapacitated

Strength Roll Result

Critical Failure Character worsens to Mortally Wounded.

2-7 Character remains Incapacitated.

8+ Character improves to Severely Wounded.

Mortally Wounded

Strength Roll Result

Critical Failure Character dies.

2-7 Character remains Mortally Wounded.

8+ Character improves to Incapacitated.

Assisted Healing

Injury Level

Stunned, unconscious

Wounded, Severely Wounded

Incapacitated

Mortally Wounded

Difficulty

Easy (10)

Moderate (15)

Difficult (20)

Very Difficult (25)

CHAPTER 12: COMBAT OPTIONS

What's in this Chapter

Players sometimes want their characters to do some pretty fancy maneuvers during combat. This chapter offer guidance with several common ones.

Using the Modifiers

All modifiers listed in this chapter and in the "*Combat*" chapter are cumulative, though the Galaxy Master (GM) doesn't need to include all of them. Modifiers may never adjust the total combat Difficulty below 3.

The Galaxy Master (GM) rolls the indicated modifier and adds it to the combat situation. A standard modifier is included in parentheses after the die modifier, should the Galaxy Master (GM) prefer not to roll.

Firearms Options

Burst Fire as Single

A character may perform this attack only with a weapon capable of burst fire (like an assault rifle) and switching to single fire. The firer fires only one shot instead of a burst; it is primarily used to conserve ammunition.

Full Auto

This attack is only possible with weapons that can fire at fully automatic settings (such as assault rifles, submachine guns, and machineguns). Since the character takes time to "hold down the trigger" and pump ammo into the air, the extra "to hit" and "damage" bonuses are somewhat compensated for by the modifier to the character's defensive value during the round he is performing a full auto attack.

Single Fire as Multi

The character fires a weapon several times in a round at the same target. The most common example is when someone fires a pistol several times in a row at the same target. Characters may use this option only when a weapon automatically reloads itself after firing a single shot or when it is fairly easy to ready it for firing again (such as a .45 automatic, which puts a new shell in the slide as soon as the first one clears the barrel). It increases the character's chance to hit a target, as well as the damage. It does not count as a multi-action as long as the shot is taken at the same target. One target, one die roll, one damage total.

Sweep (Ranged)

The character wants to "spray an area" with ammo. Only characters with weapons that go full auto, burst, or single fire as multi (in general, just about any automatic weapon) can perform this maneuver.

The gun uses the amount of ammunition needed by whichever setting is used. They gain a positive modifier to hit (because of the sheer volume of shots), but this "non-targeted" attack results in a lower damage total.

Brawling/Melee Combat Options

Acrobatic Tricks

Acrobatics can also enhance brawling and melee combat attacks. The character must perform the acrobatics trick and the attack on the same turn. The Galaxy Master (GM) determines the exact Difficulty of the *Acrobatics* attempt. The player may add one-half of the difference (rounded up) between the Difficulty and the successful *Acrobatics* roll to the amount of damage done (not to the combat skill roll). One *Acrobatics* trick roll can affect one attack only.

All-out

The character attacks with no thought to the consequences. This maneuver increases the chance of the character striking the target, but, in that round, the attacker cannot perform any other action at all – not even to actively defend.

Lunge

The character takes a step forward to jab at an opponent, usually with an edged weapon. This adds about a half-meter (more or less depending on the stride) to the range of the attack, but it lowers the effectiveness of the attack.

Knockdown/Push/Trip

Using brawling or a blunt melee weapon in the usual way, the attacker causes his target to stumble and, instead of taking damage, the opponent loses 2D from her next *Agility* or *Agility*-based skill roll. If this is a knockdown or trip attempt, she must also spend one action to stand up again. Generally, unless the character has special training, he may only knockdown or push a character whose *Strength* (including Special Abilities or Disadvantage modifiers) is equal to or less than his own.

Sweep

These attacks, usually foot sweeps or roundhouses, are used when the character wants to make certain she hits the target, regardless of how much injury is caused.

Tackle

Tackling is much like grabbing, except that the attacker seeks to overcome the target entirely. Characters may perform this with brawling only. If successful or the target chooses not to struggle, the character captures the target and may, if desired, do normal damage. The target, meanwhile, may make no actions other than attempt to escape (see the escape rules herein). On subsequent rounds, the attacker may choose to do her Strength Damage only (no modifiers).

Grab

The attacker physically grasps a target. Few melee weapons allow this option, so it is used generally only in brawling attacks. What effect this has on the target depends on the type of grab. (The ones listed here are choke, flip, hold, slam/throw, and arm pin.) See the escape rules in this chapter for details on getting out of grabs. On subsequent rounds of a grab, the attacker may do his Strength Damage only (no modifiers except those from Special Abilities or equipment) if he defeats the victim's escape attempt or if the defender chooses not to resist. Some grab variations may offer other options.

Choke

Ropes and hands can cut off the target's source of air. Damage on the first round equals the character's Strength Damage plus any modifiers. See the general grab rules for damage on subsequent rounds.

Flip

The character reaches out, grabs his opponent's wrist, arm, leg, or similar body part, and jerks violently, causing the opponent to fall to the ground. The opponent takes 3D in damage from slamming into the ground and must spend the next round getting to her feet (if she can).

Hold

The character does less damage (-3D or more, at the player's option, to the damage total), but she has hold of the target with a successful attack.

Slam/Throw

The character grabs or picks up his opponent and hurls him into the ground, a wall, a bus, or another obstacle. Lifting the opponent counts as an action (using the lift skill), as does slamming or throwing the target (which uses the throwing skill). The character must be strong enough to pick his opponent up to use this maneuver.

Once slammed into an object, the target takes the damage score of the object (usually determined by its Toughness, but the Galaxy Master (GM) may adjust this) plus the attacker's Strength Damage. The object being slammed into takes the Strength Damage of the opponent.

Arm Pin

The hero grabs his target's arm and forces it around behind her, pinning it there. After the first round, the player has three choices as to what his character can do. Each option counts as a separate action.

- Option 1: The character does his Strength Damage only for each round he has the arm pinned.
- Option 2: The character tries to break the opponent's arm. The attacker must make a successful Strength or lift roll versus a breaking Difficulty.

Against an opponent who does not resist, the Difficulty equals 2 times the target's Strength or lift die code plus the pips plus any relevant protection. Failing to beat the breaking Difficulty in this case means the target takes damage as in option 1.

Should the target chooses to resist, she may make no other action in the round, but she may move her turn up. Instead, the player rolls her character's Strength or lift and adds 5 and any relevant

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protection to the total to generate the breaking Difficulty. Failure by the attacker to beat the breaking Difficulty in this case means that the target escapes and may freely take action on the next round.

- Option 3: The character may attempt to force the target to the ground while maintaining his hold on the arm. The attacker rolls his brawling against a submission Difficulty.

If the opponent does not resist, the submission Difficulty equals 2 times her *Agility* die code, dropping the pips. Failing to beat the breaking Difficulty in this case means the target takes damage as in option 1.

If the target chooses to resist, the opponent may make no other action in the round, though she may move her turn up. Instead, the player rolls her character's *Agility* and adds 5 and any relevant modifiers to the total to generate the submission Difficulty. Failure by the attacker to beat the Difficulty in this case means that the target escapes and may freely take action on the next round.

Combat Difficulty Modifiers

Firearms

Option	Difficulty Modifier	Damage Modifier
Burst fire as single	0	-2D
Full auto	-2D (-6)	+2D
Single fire as multi	-1D (-3)*	+1D*
Sweep	-2D (-6)	-3D

* Modifiers are per additional round of ammunition, up to maximum that the weapon holds.

Brawling, Melee Combat

Option	Difficulty Modifier	Damage Modifier
All-out	-2D (-6)	+1D
Grab	+2D (+6)	*
Lunge	+1D (+3)	-1D
Knockdown, trip	+2D (+6)	*
Push	+1D (+3)	*
Sweep	-2D (-6)	-3D
Tackle	+1D (+3)	*

All Attacks

Option	Difficulty Modifier	Damage Modifier
Low gravity	-1D (-3)	0
No gravity	-2D (-6)	0
Heavy gravity	+3D (+10)	0

Called Shot

Target is...	Difficulty Modifier	Damage Modifier
10 to 50 centimeters long	+1D (+3)	*
1 to 10 centimeters long	+4D (+12)	*
Less than a centimeter long	+8D (+24)	*

* See text for options.

Other Modifiers

- *The attacker is blind or blinded: +4D (+12) to the combat difficulty.*
- *The target is blind or blinded or attacked from behind: -4D (-12) to the combat difficulty.*

Additional Combat Options

Called Shot

The character chooses a specific target, like a laser pistol in a bounty hunter's hand, and aims for that. A called-shot modifier represents the Difficulty of this (see the table on page 82), which is added to the combat Difficulty. On a successful attack, he knocks the item out of the target's hand, grabs the limb, pins the target to a wall, or does +1D (or more, at the Galaxy Master (GM)'s discretion) to the damage. The exact result depends on the situation and the player's intent.

Breaking Things

Use the *Demolitions* skill guidelines in the "Example Skill difficulties" chapter for determining the effect of damage on items.

Disarm

If the disarm attempt is successful and the target character has not made an action yet, she may move up her action to try and keep a grip on the item she's holding. The defending character makes a Strength or lift roll against the amount of damage done. If the defender's roll is greater than the damage, the target character retains the item. If it is less than or equal to the damage, she drops it.

Entangle

A hero throws an entangling weapon at her opponent. On a successful *Firearms*, *Missile Weapons*, or *Throwing* roll (as appropriate), the end of the weapon wraps itself around the target. Unless the weapon is spiked, electrified, or enhanced in some other way, it does no damage, but it prevents the target from doing any action except for trying to break free. The target may escape by snapping the bonds or slipping free, each of which counts as an action. To break the weapon, he must make a *Strength* or *Lift* roll that meets or beats the damage total of the weapon. To slip free, he needs to roll an *Agility* or *Acrobatics* total equal to or higher than the weapon's damage total.

Escape

To break free from any hold, the character must make a successful opposed Strength or lift roll versus the holder's Strength or lift. This counts as an action.

Group Attack

This is a coordinated action. See the description of the command skill in the next chapter for details.

Hit Locations

Hit locations are a special kind of called shot that allows a character to shoot or strike a specific point on his target's body. The table is used to determine the modifiers for hitting a target of Human proportions in different areas of his body. Note that aiming at an arm or leg actually causes less damage- this is because the character took extra care to shoot an area that is "less vital."

Hit Location Table

Option	Difficulty Modifier	Damage Modifier
Head	+10 (+5)	+12
Heart	+40 (+15)	+12
Chest, abdomen	+0	+0
Left or right arm	+10 (+5)	-2
Left or right leg	+10 (+5)	-1
Left or right hand	+40 (+15)	-2

Effects

At the Galaxy Master (GM)'s discretion, sufficient damage to a particular hit location can affect the target's ability to use that part. Except for blows to the chest, the modifier lasts until the character heals that portion (which typically takes a few days, as Body Points or Wounds are recovered for the body as a whole, not just a specific part). When the medicine skill or a healing effect is applied, it can be specified to repair one particular location.

Hit location modifiers are in addition to Wound level modifiers. If you are using them instead of the Wound level modifiers, then all -1 modifiers increase to -10 modifiers.

Chest: The character can do no more than passively defend in the next round.

Foot or leg: -1 to all *Acrobatics*, *Sneak*, *Movement*, and *Initiative* totals.

Hand or arm: -1 to all *Acrobatics*, *Brawling*, *Climb/Jump*, *Melee Combat*, *Missile Weapons*, *Sleight of Hand*, *Throwing*, *Lift*, and any other rolls involving the hand or arm.

Head: -1 to all *Knowledge*, *Perception*, and *Initiative* totals.

Knockout

This option does only half of the normal damage, but it can render the target immediately unconscious with a successful attack. It requires a successful called shot to the head. If, after the resistance total has been subtracted, the target sustains at least two Wound levels or 50% of his maximum Body Points in damage, then he falls unconscious for a number of hours equal to difference between the combat skill total and the combat Difficulty or until he's awoken by some external force, whichever comes first.

The target receives only half the Wound levels or Body Point damage inflicted (round down).

Multiple Weapons

Weapons that characters can use with one hand and in either hand, such as knives or most guns, may be employed at the same time in the same round. The character incurs a multi-action penalty.

Prone and Crouching

Attacking a target that is crouched on the ground adds 1D (3) to the combat Difficulty. If the target is moving while crouching, then the combat Difficulty increases by +2D (+6), but the defending character's normal Move, free Move, or running roll is halved.

For prone targets, subtract 2D (6) from the combat Difficulty when attacking at Point Blank or Short range, but add 2D (6) to combat Difficulty when attacking at Medium or Long range.

Characters who willingly get low to the ground or make themselves small may get into and out of the position as a free action. However, character forced into that position, such as a result of being thrown, need to make an effort to stand, which counts as an action.

Quick Draw

This option allows the character to act rapidly or draw and fire a weapon in the same round as one action. The character may use any combat skill or appropriate specialization. If she is also using a weapon, it must be suitable for quick drawing (a bow and arrow, a loaded pistol, a dagger, a shuriken).

Before initiative is rolled, the player must announce that she intends for her character to draw her weapon quickly. The player may then take some of the skill dice and add them to the *Perception* die code for purposes of increasing initiative for that round only. The player must leave at least 1D in her skill. If the character wants to make multiple attacks, she subtracts 1D for each attack beyond the first from the number of dice in the skill she's using before the player moves dice around. She does not take a penalty for the draw.

All attacks by the hero in the same round must be made with the same skill, though the results are determined differently and they all occur at the same die code because the multi-action penalty was already figured in.

Example: Two mercenaries face each other in a stand-o.. One of the mercenaries has 4D in Perception and 8D in firearms. He may take up to 7D and add it to his Perception die code to determine initiative. The mercenary, however, wants to fire twice. After subtracting 1D for the extra attack, he now has 7D in the skill, which allows him to add up to 6D to the initiative roll. He decides to move only 3D. This gives him 7D in Perception to determine initiative and 4D in firearms. Now both mercenaries make their initiative rolls.

Once initiative is determined, at the character's turn in the round, he uses the remaining dice in the skill to determine his accuracy.

Ready a Weapon

It takes one action per item to draw a gun, unsheathe a knife, reload a rifle, or something similar. Although this generally does not require a skill roll, the Galaxy Master (GM) may require one related to the weapon in question for particularly stressful situations. Additionally, drawing and using the weapon in the same round incurs a multi-action penalty. The Galaxy Master (GM) may add further modifiers for attempting to get out an item from a restrictive location or ready an unwieldy weapon.

Scale

Occasionally, objects of vastly different sizes get involved in fights. The scale modifier accounts for the fact that bigger items are easier to hit, and usually can take more damage, than smaller ones. Use the accompanying chart as a guide for determining the appropriate value for the two combat participants. Galaxy Master (GM)s may further subdivide between levels.

If both opponents are either larger than or equal to a Human or smaller than or equal to a Human, subtract the larger number from the smaller one to calculate the scale modifier. If one opponent is smaller than a Human while the other is larger, then add together the two values.

For most cases, use these rules: If the attacker is larger than the defender, then the scale modifier is added to the combat Difficulty and the damage total. If the attacker is smaller than the defender, then the scale modifier is added to the attacker's combat skill total and the defender's damage resistance total.

***Example:** A smuggler has snuck into a warehouse guarded by miniature robots. The robots have a scale value of 6. With the smuggler's scale value of the zero, the scale modifier is 6 (6- 0). Because the robot is smaller than the smuggler, the robot gets a +6 to its firearms roll, while the smuggler gets a +6 to her damage resistance total. When the smuggler attacks the robot, the scale modifier is added to the smuggler's combat Difficulty and to her damage total, if she manages to shoot it.*

In some cases, the object may be large but lightly constructed (such as a parade balloon). At these times, the Galaxy Master (GM) should not add the scale modifier to the damage resistance total.

Typically, a weapon's scale when determining how much damage it does is the same as the person holding it or the thing it's mounted on. So, a rifle has a scale value of 0, while a full-size tank's gun has a scale of 10. These would differ if someone targeted just the weapon.

Scale Table

Participant Size	Value
Small moon	96
Star freighter	50
Space yacht	46
Eight-story building	24
Four-story building	20
Two-story house	14
Tank	10
Average personal transport	6
Motorcycle	3
Average Human	0
Small Human child	3
Briefcase	6
Laser pistol	9
Palm computer	12
Cred-key	15
Computer chip	21

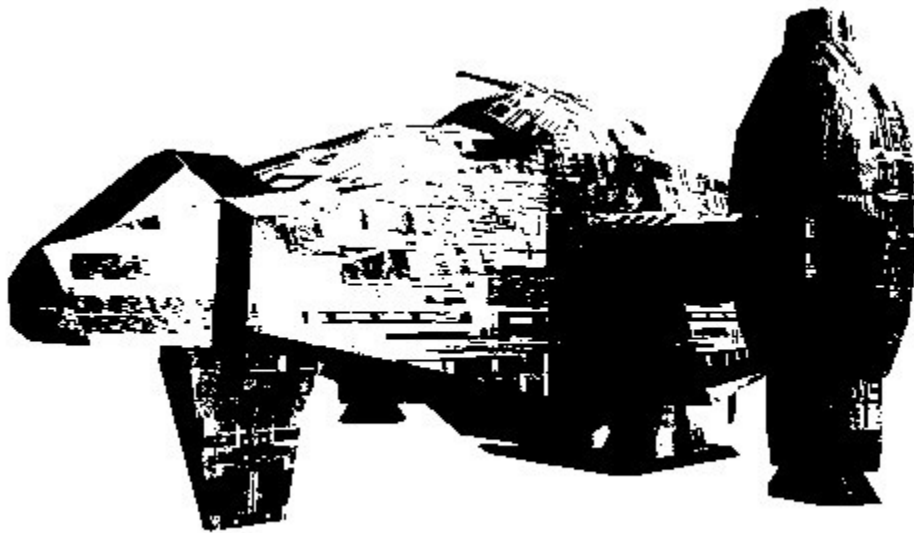
Surprise

A hero who surprises her opponent may either act first in the round (if initiative hasn't already been

determined) or gain a +1D to her action. Attacks from behind, an ambush, or unexpected sources (such as a companion) make up the most common sources of surprise.

Unwieldy Weapon

Melee weapons longer than 60 centimeters, objects that are hard to throw or grasp, ones relying on technology with which the user is unfamiliar, or any weapons otherwise difficult to wield may incur a +5 or more modifier to the combat Difficulty. The Galaxy Master (GM) may decide that such factors as experience, strength, and features of the weapon (such as a well-balanced sword) lower this modifier.



Surprisingly, some very ancient starship designs remain in use, some from thousands of years past. Whether this is due to time dilation effects or diligent maintenance schedules is uncertain.

CHAPTER 13: EXAMPLE SKILL DIFFICULTIES

WHAT'S IN THIS CHAPTER

The “*Character Basics*” chapter provided brief descriptions of each skill (and you will need to return to that chapter if you need a refresher). When the generic difficulties aren't enough, look up various skills in this chapter to get even more ideas on the challenge level for using those skills in common situations. Of course, not every possibility has been covered, but this provides a terrific foundation.

Using the Difficulties and Modifiers

Unless otherwise stated, all listed modifiers are to the Difficulty. modifiers may be cumulative, depending on the situation- the tenser they are, the more important the minutia become. The associated attributed is listed after the skill name.

Metaphysics Skills

Descriptions and difficulties for Metaphysics skills are found in its own chapter.

Combat Skills (Agility, Mechanical)

Skills covered: brawling, dodge, firearms, melee combat, missile weapons, gunnery, throwing

See the “Combat” chapter for the Difficulty to use combat skills. For throwing, see also that skill's entry in this chapter.

Information Skills (Knowledge)

Skills covered: aliens, astrology, bureaucracy, business, cultures, scholar, security regulations

The Knowledge attribute assists characters in finding out how much they know about a certain field, modified depending on the situation. For this reason, one chart of general difficulties can serve most uses of Knowledge, several Knowledge-based skills (see the list), and investigation attempts involving researching a topic.

Galaxy Master (GM)s can employ the “Information difficulties” chart in one of two ways: by picking a Difficulty based on what the character seeks or wants to recall, or by comparing the skill total rolled to the difficulties (whichever level the character meets or beats is the amount and type of information collected or recollected). Realize that the less well-defined the skill is, the less information the character knows or finds.

One high roll in any of these skills does not necessarily make the character an expert in that field. The roll represents only what the character recalls at the time. A high roll could reveal a specific detail of the information sought, as well as some hints for discovering more of what the character seeks.

Characters may be assumed to have a general knowledge of their home country, culture, and era, including basic geography, famous people, and common etiquette.

Information Difficulties

Amount of Information

	Difficulty
Basic or common information; unconfirmed rumors	5
Theories; generalities	10
Complex concepts; moderately detailed information	15
Professional level; extensive (though not complete) information	20
Cutting-edge topics; extensive information, including peripheral details and extrapolations	30

Condition

	Modifier
Age of information (per century in the past)	+5
Closely guarded secret	+15

Interaction Skills (Perception, Knowledge)

Skills Covered: Con, Intimidation, Persuasion

Characters use *Con*, *Intimidation*, or *Persuasion* skills to influence other people that they meet. The typical Difficulty is 10, modified based on the dispositions of the characters involved, but a Galaxy Master (GM) may base it on a skill roll. See the "Mental Defenses" sidebar for more information on this; suggested Difficulty modifiers are listed in their own sidebar.

Die rolls alone should not determine interactions between players' and Galaxy Master (GM)'s characters. Galaxy Master (GM)s should have their players detail what their characters say and do to before rolling the dice. The better the player acts the role of his character, the greater his chance of success should be, which Galaxy Master (GM)s can reflect by allowing up to a +10 modifier to the skill roll.

See also the individual entry in this chapter for *Con*.

Interaction Difficulties

Situation

	Modifier
Target is friendly or trusting	-5
Target is neutral toward character or of equal standing	+0
Target is hostile or has superior standing	+5
Target is an enemy	+10
Target is in weakened position	-10
Request is something target would do anyway or target feels is of minor importance	+0
Request is illegal or highly dangerous	+10
Target is on guard or actively resisting*	+10

*Do not include this modifier if you are using the active mental defense described in the "Mental Defenses" sidebar.

Using in Combat

Con, *persuasion*, and *intimidation* can enhance a character's attacks and defenses. The player adds one-half of the difference (positive or negative) between the Difficulty and the *con*, *intimidation*, or *persuasion* roll to any one attack or defense attempt (not both) made at Point Blank or Short range. The character must use the benefit from scaring (*intimidation*), tricking (*con*), or seducing (*persuasion*) the target on the same turn as or on the round after the interaction endeavor.

The user's appearance and demeanor can also affect *persuasion*, *con*, or *intimidation* attempts. The

more threatening the character looks or seems, the less effective con and persuasion actions are, while intimidation attempts are more effective. Use the "Generic modifiers" table in the "Game Basics" chapter to decide how much the appearance and demeanor affect the target, if a Disadvantage or Special Ability doesn't already provide one.

Interrogation Attempts

Characters may use intimidation or persuasion to get information out of someone. Use the rules for mental defenses to determine the Difficulty and base interaction modifiers. Further modify the number by how important the information is to the target. (See the accompanying chart for suggestions.) A separate intimidation roll to scare the target can complement an interrogation session.

Interrogation Difficulties

Target...	Modifier
Feels information is unimportant	-10
Feels information is of minor importance	+0
Feels information is important	+5
Feels information is very important	+10
Would rather die than reveal information	+10 or more

Mental Defenses

In general, the resistance difficulty for many Metaphysics or any interaction skill equals 10. The target cannot actively resist unless he knows that a psychic or interaction skill is being used on him by another character. If the Galaxy Master (GM)

decides that the target suspects but does not know for certain that someone is attempting to influence him, the Galaxy Master (GM) may allow the character to take an action earlier than his turn in the round and roll his willpower or Knowledge to generate a new resistance difficulty. Should the character decide to actively defend against mental intrusion or personal interaction,

he may devote all of his actions for the round to that task and roll his *Willpower* or *Knowledge*, adding +10 to the score to get the new resistance difficulty. However the interaction resistance difficulty is determined, Galaxy Master (GM)s may further modify the number as the situation warrants (such as stress, surprise, or character relationship)

Observation Skills (Perception, Mechanical)

Skills Covered: *Search, Comm, Sensors*

Galaxy Master (GM)s can rely on the "Observation difficulties" chart on the next page for situations involving the gathering of information. They can be used as difficulties to beat or as a means of reading the results of a dice toss.

To see if a character notices details of a scene or situation, the Galaxy Master (GM) may have the player make a Perception roll. Unless the characters are actively eavesdropping, searching, tracking, or performing a similar activity (and thus using the search skill), this passive observance of a scene does not count as an action. Use the "Observation difficulties" chart as a guideline for how much the character notices. If the skill total meets or beats the Difficulty, the character gains that much information.

Observation Difficulties

Situation	Difficulty
Noticing obvious, generic facts; casual glance	5
Noticing obvious details (ex. number of people)	10
Noticing a few less obvious details (ex. gist of conversation)	15
Spotting a few specific details (ex. identities of individuals)	20
Spotting a few obscure details (ex. specifics of conversation)	25
Noticing many obscure details	30 or more

Repair Skills (Technical)

Skills Covered: armor repair, computer interface/repair, exoskeleton repair, firearms repair, flight systems repair, gunnery repair, personal equipment repair, robot interface/repair, vehicle repair

Though there are many different kinds of repair skills, they all follow the same principles. The base Difficulty to .x or modify anything is 10. The amount of damage sustained, the character's familiarity with the item, availability of parts, and complexity of the task can modify the Difficulty. The Galaxy Master (GM) may require a separate roll to determine whether the character can figure out how to repair an unknown item. Destroyed parts must be replaced, which raises the Difficulty. Additionally, if a hero rushes the job, not only is there an increased chance of failure, but the item could also break again soon after its next use.

See also the computer interface/repair and robot interface/repair entries in this chapter and the "Cybernetics" chapter for details on installing cybernetics with personal equipment repair.

Situation	Modifier
Light repairs or modifications	+0
Heavy repairs or modifications	+5
Extensive repairs or modifications	+10 or more
Previously built or modified the item; intimately familiar with item	-10
Has item's designs	-5
Common item	+0
Has seen but not used item	+5
Has never seen item	+10
All parts available	+0
Some parts available	+10
No parts available	+20
Correct tools*	+0
Makeshift tools	+15

*Tool kits might provide their own bonuses.

Aliens, Astrography, Bureaucracy, Business, Cultures, Scholar, Security Regulations (Knowledge)

See "Information Skills" in this chapter for difficulties and modifiers related to using these skills.

Exoskeleton Operation, Vehicle Operation (Mechanical)

See the "Vehicles and Aerial Characters" section in the "Movement" chapter for details on using these

skills.

Flying/O-G, Running (Agility), Swim (Strength) Difficulties for these skills are included in the "Movement" chapter.

Hide, Sneak (Perception)

The Difficulty for a hide or sneak attempt is usually the opponent's Perception or search, either as a die roll (if the opponent is actively trying to find the object or person) or as a derived value equal to the number in front of the "D" in the opponent's attribute or skill times 2 and add the pips.

Condition	Modifier
Heavy rain or snow	-3
Dawn, dusk, fog, many trees, large crowd, etc.	-2
Night	-5
Inattentive observer	-5
Dense concealment (thick jungle, crowd of people in costume)	-5
Many distractions (party, parade, combat)	-5
Attentive observer	+6
Open terrain	+6
Good lighting	+6
Several observers	+9

Acrobatics (Agility)

Using acrobatics can also improve many of a character's climb/jump and running attempts. The Galaxy Master (GM) determines the Difficulty of the *Acrobatics* stunt. One-half of the difference (rounded up) between the Difficulty and the *Acrobatics* roll is added to the complementary skill. The acrobatics attempt and the *Climb/Jump* or *Running* try must be done on the same turn, incurring a multi-action penalty.

Instead of adding a modifier to the running or swim Difficulty for particularly challenging obstacle courses, the Galaxy Master (GM) may have the hero make an *Acrobatics* roll in addition to a *Running* or *Swim* roll.

Acrobatics can make a character appear more intimidating. The player may add one-half of the difference (rounded up) between the Difficulty and the successful acrobatics roll to her intimidation attempt. The intimidating attempt may be made on the same turn as the acrobatics roll or on the next round.

During a fall, acrobatics may be used to reduce bodily harm. If the character has not already used his turn for the round, he may rely on acrobatics in an attempt to land properly. The character generates an *Acrobatics* total. For every five points over the base Difficulty number of 10, the hero reduces the damage total by one point, in addition to a base reduction of one point. The damage total, however, cannot be lower than zero.

Maneuver	Difficulty
Somersault; pirouette	5
Handspring; cartwheel; handstand	10
Swing over an obstacle	10
Round-off; backflip	15
Vaulting over an obstacle	15

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Bouncing off a surface to reach a specific destination	20
Walking up a wall*	30

*The character may "walk" a maximum of her Move in one round; she must have a flat surface to stop on at the end of her turn or she falls and takes damage from the fall.

Condition	Modifier
Flat surface to flat surface	+0
Unlimited landing area	-3
Limited landing area	+3
Almost no landing area	+6
Rough or unsteady landing area	+3 or more
High surface to low surface	+3
Low surface to high surface	+6
Slippery surface	+3
Strong wind	+3
Add a twist of the body (per twist)	+3
Performing the maneuver underwater or backwards	+3
Performing the maneuver in the air (such as on a trapeze or bars)	+9
Performing the maneuver on a narrow surface	+6

Note: Characters may combine one or more maneuvers in the same action. In this case, use the Difficulty of the most challenging maneuver, add 3 for each additional maneuver (up to five additional maneuvers), and include modifiers as if the complex stunt was one maneuver.

Acrobatics can also aid a character in escaping from bonds. The chart below contains sample Difficulty numbers for escaping from various kinds of restraints. Modify the Difficulty based on the circumstances of the escape, such as the conditions the character works under or specially designed restraints. The character may not use this skill if completely immobilized. If in multiple restraints, the character must make a separate roll for each one. A Critical Failure indicates that the character has pulled a muscle (and he does his Strength Damage to himself).

Note that this skill does not substitute for the *Sleight of Hand* skill. The character may be able to pull his arms over his head to use his hands, but he may not be able to slip out of the handcuffs unless they are improperly secured.

Sample Restraints	Difficulty
Ropes	13
Wires, chain	15
Handcuffs	16
Straitjacket	18

Artist (Perception)

The time needed to perform the artist skill varies, depending on the quality and complexity of a piece. A simple amateur piece may only take a few minutes, while a complex, prize-winning endeavor could require weeks or months. Characters may also use this skill to judge works of art created by others and possibly as a complementary skill to forgery to detect fake artistic pieces. The higher the total is above the creation total for the piece, the more information the judge knows about it (such as flaws, alterations, its creator, and the like).

Quality of Piece	Difficulty
Amateur	9

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Professional	15
Emotionally moving	18
Prize-winning	24

Complexity of Piece	Modifier
Simple; has one or two parts	-5
Moderate; has a few parts	+0
Complex; has many parts	+10

Bargain (Perception)

Characters use this skill to haggle over prices. The Galaxy Master (GM) should use a mixture of roleplaying and die rolls to determine how the character is doing at acquiring selling the desired goods or services.

The player always has the choice to refuse a deal. Similarly, if the Galaxy Master (GM) feels that the character's roll represents an unfair deal, without the player embellishing by roleplaying the situation, he should allow the Galaxy Master (GM)'s character to refuse the deal as well.

To resolve the haggling, either make an opposed skill roll using any modifiers appropriate or select an appropriate standard Difficulty number. Subtract the seller's total from the buyer's total and look up the number on the chart below. Multiply the price of the item (as credits or a number) by the percentage given to get its final cost. Be certain to include any price modifiers (as suggested in the "Equipment" chapter) before making the adjustment. If using Funds, this becomes the new number the Funds roll must meet or exceed.

Difference	Price Adjustment
-21 or more	300% of local market value
-16 - 20	200% of local market value
-11 - 15	150% of local market value
-6 - 10	125% of local market value
-3 - 5	110% of local market value
-2 to 2	At local market value
+3 - 5	90% of local market value
+6 - 10	85% of local market value
+11 - 15	75% of local market value
+16 - 20	65% of local market value
+21 or more	50% of local market value

Characters can also employ bargain to "pay" another person to behave dishonorably, such as through ignoring duty, looking the other way, or divulging secret information. Success depends greatly on the target. A target who is loyal or wealthy or fears being caught is less likely to accept bribes. Use the difficulties listed under "Interaction Skills" and further modified by such factors as the value of the money, goods, or information offered, the extent of favors given and received, and the target's attitude toward the bribe.

Value of Bribe	Modifier
Less than 50% of what is reasonable	+10
50% to 90% of what is reasonable	+5
Larger than expected	-5
Significantly larger than expected	-10

Climb/Jump (Strength)

Base difficulties for uses of this skill are included in the “*Movement*” chapter. Note that taking care in climbing and carrying 50% or more of the character’s body weight slows the character down by two meters or more per round.

Climb Condition	Modifier
Taking care in climbing	-5
Less than a 90-degree angle	-3
Less than a 60-degree angle	-6
Less than a 45-degree angle	-9
Prepared for climbing	-6
Carrying 25% of body weight	+3
Carrying 50% of body weight	+6
Carrying 100% of body weight	+15
Many handholds	-10

Jump Condition	Modifier
Flat surface to flat surface	0
Unlimited landing area	-5
Limited landing area	+5
Almost no landing area	+10
Rough, slick, or unsteady landing area	+3 or more
Uphill (more than 30 degrees)	+6
Carrying 50% of own weight	+6
Carrying 75% of own weight	+9
Carrying 100% of own weight	+12

Command (Perception)

Command governs the act of convincing individuals to comply with specific directions, as well as maintaining morale during group undertakings (such as combat or building large pieces of equipment). This skill is typically used only with the Galaxy Master (GM)’s characters, though sometimes it may be attempted with players’ characters (such situations should be roleplayed first, with a bonus or penalty to the command roll based on how well the group participated in the activity together). A high *Command* roll can complement individual participants’ rolls in a group activity, while a low *Command* roll can impose negative modifiers. It generally requires at least one round of planning to perform effectively.

Characters can use this skill to combine their attacks. One person is designated the leader and makes the *Command* roll. If successful, everyone goes on the leader’s initiative. Participants make their attacks with the hit location modifier (to reflect that they’re aiming for a designated location), but the target resists the combined total of all damage done it. If the *Command* roll fails, determine initiative and actions individually.

Complexity	Difficulty
Uncomplicated; imprecise	3
Easy; minimal precision required	7
Requires effort or precision	12
Difficult; requires high degree of precision	17
Requires much effort or extreme precision	22
Requires care and thoughtfulness, or exacting precision	28

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Team

	Modifier
All members willing to follow leader's orders no matter what	-20
All members willing to sacrifice life for others	-15
Trained together frequently to work as unit	-10
Trained together briefly to work as unit	-5
Work together regularly, or willing to work together	+0
Worked together on a few occasions	+5
Seldom work together	+10
Never worked together before, or more than half of the members hate each other	+15
No interest in working together, all members despise each other, or members can't communicate with each other	+20

Computer Interface/Repair (Technical)

The base Difficulty is 10.

Computer Use

	Situation Modifier
Open-access personal computer or mainframe	+0
Networked computer	+0
Isolated computer	+3
Accessible by a few people	+3
Accessible by owner only	+6
Password protected	+3
Firewall protection	+6
Files encrypted	+3 or more

Programming Situation

	Modifier
Simple programming language	+0
Complex programming language	+3
Encrypting program	+6
Program designed to accomplish multiple tasks (per task)	+3
Designed to work on multiple operating systems (per additional system)	+6

Condition

	Modifier
Character unfamiliar with the program's language	+3
Character experienced with the program's language	-3

Con (Perception)

In addition to tricking people verbally, a character can use con to change his appearance. The character's skill total in creating the disguise serves two related purposes. First, the higher the roll, the less likely an observer will question the disguise. Second, the total becomes the Difficulty number for *Perception* or *Investigation* efforts to see through it. If the investigation check is higher than the con total, the disguise has been penetrated.

If at any time while the character is disguised he performs an action inconsistent with the disguise, any observer has a chance to see through it.

Although one character may use con to alter the features of another character, the disguised character must actively work at keeping up the disguise using her own *Con* skill or *Perception*.

Condition	Modifier
Specific person	+15
Other sex	+6
Different race or species	+3

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Great age difference	+3
Much larger build	+5
Much smaller build	+10
Resembles the disguise already	-5
Using skill on another character	+6
Using skill unaided	+3

Demolitions (Technical)

The base Difficulty is 5. For extra damage and special effects, the character must spend one round per Difficulty number setting up the explosives. The character also needs to indicate how much explosive she's using. If the attempt is successful, compare the skill total with the object's damage resistance total (its Toughness modified by size, thickness, flaws, supports, etc.). Items that take at least 10 points above their damage resistance total are severely damaged, if not destroyed. Items taking less than that are weakened, and another attempt may be made (with the object having a reduced damage resistance total and possibly other problems).

Remember that, while a character may think an object is constructed of one type of material, it may not be. Though this does not alter the Difficulty of setting the explosive, it may change the results of special effects. For instance, an explosive set for thin wood won't do much good if that's only veneer for reinforced steel.

Example Result

Rigging a bomb so a car explodes the next time it starts	Modifier +0
Blowing something open without leaving permanent marks or burns	+5
Rigging an explosion so its force goes in a specific direction	+10
Rigging an explosion so that only a certain, small piece of a much larger object is damaged	+15
Extra damage	+5 per +10

Familiarity with Target

Very familiar or common (tree, wall)	Modifier +0
Familiar (bulkhead, bridge support)	+5
Unfamiliar (building of unknown construction)	+10
Completely unknown item or construction	+20 or more

Object Construction

Flimsy (plywood door)	Toughness 10
Tough (hard wooden door, most guns)	20
Sturdy (bolted steel door, personal safe)	30
Very sturdy (a few layers of steel)	40
Reinforced (numerous layers of steel)	60

Forgery (Perception)

The artist skill may complement this skill, or the Galaxy Master (GM) may require it to be used instead, with the appropriate forgery modifiers applied. Reduce the amount of time spent on creating a forgery if the character has repeatedly succeeded at making similar items in the past.

Forger

Item Forged	Difficulty	Time required
Unofficial note or correspondence	6	10 minutes or more

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Signature	12	5 minutes
Official document (pilot's license, legal tender)	18	20 minutes or more

Familiarity with Item	Modifier
Intimately familiar or has sample	-10
Somewhat familiar; has seen it quite often	-5
Passingly familiar	+0
Have only had it described	+5
Guessing blindly	+15

Tools	Modifier
Have necessary tools and some special ones	-5
Have necessary tools	0
Have some tools	+5
Missing important tools	+10 or more

Forgery Inspector

Familiarity with Item Forged	Difficulty
Intimately familiar	6
Moderately familiar	12
Unfamiliar	18
Completely unfamiliar	24

Situation	Modifier
Have sample	-5
Have special tools for detecting forgeries	-5
Item poorly forged*	+0
Item well forged*	+5
Item superiorly forged*	+10

*The Galaxy Master (GM) may add the number of points above the forging difficulty to the inspector's Difficulty instead of using one of these modifiers.

Gambling (Perception)

Gambling doesn't affect games that are purely random, but does influence games with an element of strategy, like poker. All characters make opposed *Gambling* rolls, without spending Character or Fate Points, and the highest roll wins. A character may cheat by using Character or Fate Points on the roll, and the Galaxy Master (GM) may give bonuses to rolls for people looking for a cheater or helping the cheater. The Galaxy Master (GM) should consider as many "angles" as possible when using the gambling skill, and add these as modifiers to one or more participants' rolls.

Investigation (Perception)

When used to research a topic, a separate roll must be made for each source checked.

Research Situation	Difficulty
Common knowledge	7
Requires searching through several sources; introductory theories	12
Sources are of varying reliability; cutting-edge information; specific information about harmless individual/event	18
Esoteric information; specific information about dangerous individual or event	24

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Condition	Modifier
Information closely guarded	+5
Character unsure of information sought	+5
Character knows exactly what information is sought	-5

When used to figure out clues from a scene, the base Difficulty is 10. The character must use search first to find the clues or evidence (or have them pointed out); investigation helps the character figure out what they mean.

Situation	Modifier
Information about subject/event is sketchy	+15
Information about subject/event is extensive	-15
Evidence is fairly clear; many clues; familiar objects with expected use	-6 or more
Evidence is only partly clear; several clues; familiar objects with uncommon use, or unfamiliar objects with common use	+0
Evidence is obscure; few clues	+3
Evidence is unusual or with no apparent significance; uncommon objects with uncommon use	+6
Repeatedly commits similar crimes (per crime)	-3
Distance between crimes (per 80 kilometers)	+3
Time between crimes (per 6 months*)	+3

*While the crimes may have been committed over a greater time interval, the maximum value for this modifier is +30.

Roll > Difficulty	Result
0-2	Basic information about the situation (a rope was used, type of weapon).
3-6	Precise information about situation(probable manufacturing origin of evidence, small details about items in room).
7-11	Previous results plus how all items in an area were put to use.
12+	Reconstruction of events from the evidence.

Know-How (Perception)

To use this skill to help with an activity covered by another skill (which the character does not have), the character spends the round before examining the situation, performing no other actions, and making a roll of this skill versus the Difficulty set for the action. The character gets neither the unskilled modifier nor the preparing modifier. Within the next 30 seconds (six rounds), the character may add the difference between the Difficulty and the know-how skill roll to total roll for the attribute dictated by the actual skill required. The character may not use this skill in place of a skill she already has. The Galaxy Master (GM) may limit the number of times per hour this skill may be used on the same action.

Languages (Knowledge)

First, determine what the character wants to express or understand and how closely the language in which she wants to express it is to her native tongue. Then, compare the difference between the skill roll and the Difficulty to decide how close she came. Characters with a specialization in the language they are using who succeed at the skill roll receive a +3 bonus to determining the comprehension level.

Situation	Difficulty
Idea is very simple, consisting of a short phrase	3
Idea is simple; no slang; children's book	7
Idea is of average complexity; most adult nonfiction	12
Idea is complex; slang involved; most adult fiction	18
Idea is very complex; technical jargon involved; academic writing	24

Situation	Modifier
One or two common, basic words	-5
Has a translating aid (book, computer program, electronic pocket device, hand signals)*	-5
Different dialect of own language	+0
Language is derived from common root language (ex., understanding Spanish if you understand French)	+5
Completely foreign language (ex., Chinese has nothing in common with English)	+10
Obscure language; reading lips	+15
Language is unique to an uncontacted culture, from a dead culture, or unpronounceable by the character trying to understand	+20
Language includes many concepts nearly beyond the character's understanding or experience	+25

*Translation aids might provide their own bonuses, which are used instead of this.

Roll > Difficulty	Comprehension Level
0-2	Gist of idea; most words understood or conveyed properly; word usage seems stilted
3-6	Literal translation; slang expressed/translated incorrectly
7+	Subtle connotations

Lift (Strength)

At the Galaxy Master (GM)'s discretion, a player may make a lift check when his character first picks up an object. (Generally, if the object's weight would give it a Difficulty equal to or greater than one-half of the character's lift, rounded up, or the object is being lifted hastily or under stress, the Galaxy Master (GM) should require a lift roll.)

For each round the object is carried, the character makes another check to see if she can continue to carry the object. If the player fails the roll, her character is too exhausted and must put the object down. If the character is doing anything else at the time (other than walking slowly or talking), continuing to carry the object counts as a multi-action.

Abridged Lift Table

Weight	Difficulty
1 kg	1
10 kg	3
50 kg	7
100 kg	12
120 kg	13
200 kg	17

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250 kg	18
500 kg	23
750 kg	28
1000 kg (1 ton)	33
1100–2000 kg	34-43 (+1 to base of 33 per 100 kg over 1000 kg)
2500–10,000 kg	44-59 (+1 to base of 43 per 500 kg over 2000 kg)
15,000–100,000 kg	60-77 (+1 per to base of 59 per 5000 kg over 10,000 kg)

The Galaxy Master (GM) may further subdivide the lift chart if desired to include the weights for the difficulties not listed here.

Lift Fatigue Modifier

Time Skill	Modifier
1–6 rounds	0
7 rounds – 3 minutes	-5
3–10 minutes	-10
10–30 minutes	-15
30–60 minutes	-20

Note: After the first hour, the character must make a check once per hour at the same Difficulty as one hour. If the character fails the roll, then she must rest for twice as long as she was lifting the weight.

Medicine (Technical)

For game mechanics on using medicine to heal damage, see the end of the "Healing" chapter.

Action	Difficulty	Time required
Determine existence of disease or injury	7	1 round
Determine toxicity of substance	7	1 minute
Determine type of disease, toxin, or injury	12	1 minute
Determine medicine, procedure, or antidote required	18	1 round to 1 hour
Determine cause	24	1 day to 1 week

Navigation (Mechanical)

The base Difficulty for a character to find his way around a planet is 10. See the "Space Travel" chapter for information on how to get around the universe without getting lost (or too lost).

Planetary Situation	Modifier
No idea which way is north	+10
General idea which way is north	+0
Familiar with terrain	+0
Terrain completely foreign	+5
Completely lost	+10
Have a compass or similar navigational tools	-5
Plotting a simple course	+0
Plotting a complex course	+6
Plotting a dangerous course	+9
Determine exact location	+15

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Condition

Have a poorly drawn map	+1D
Have a sketchy but accurate map	+2D
Have a well-drawn map	+3D
Have a misleading or purposely inaccurate map (and don't know it)	-1D

Skill Modifier

Piloting (Mechanical)

See the "*Movement*" (specifically the "Vehicles and Aerial Characters" section) and "*Space Travel*" chapters for details on using this skill.

Riding (Agility)

When a character first mounts a rideable animal, she must make a riding roll against the creature's willpower roll (the Galaxy Master (GM) generates this). The character's riding total may be modified by the attitude of the animal toward the character. The character stays in control if she ties or beats the beast's roll. If she fails, consult the table below for what occurs.

When attempting to get the beast to perform a special maneuver or during events that might frighten it, the character must also roll against the animal's Knowledge or willpower. Examples of special maneuvers include jumping a fence, crossing a raging river, moving faster, or slowing down quickly. (The success of special maneuvers are determined with the animal's attributes or skills.)

A character attacking from the back of a beast takes a multi-action penalty for having to both control the mount and use a weapon.

Animal's Attitude

Skill modifier

Friendly or trusting
Neutral
Hostile or wounded

+5
+0
-5

Willpower > Riding

Result

1-2	Beast stops and refuses to move for 1 round.
3-6	Beast stops and refuses to move for 2 rounds.
7-11	Beast bolts in a random direction for 1D rounds.
12+	Beast bucks rider; rider must make a Moderate riding roll to avoid being thrown off.

Robot Interface/Repair (Technical)

Most robots do not have attributes, though sophisticated ones might. Instead, skills and their specializations represent the tasks a robot can perform. The programmer must have a means of inputting information into the robot, such as a computer terminal or hand computer. The time taken depends upon the complexity of the task - a Very Easy (5) program might take only half an hour to program, but a Very difficult (25) one might take days or weeks to program.

Once the robot has the basic skill, skill cartridges, scholarchips, or additional programming can upgrade it.

Program

Difficulty

Specialization of a skill (first 1D)	5
Additional +1 pip in previously programmed specialization	10
Full skill (first 1D)	15

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Additional +1 pip in previously programmed skill	5
An attribute (first 10)	25
Additional +1 pip in previously programmed attribute	15
Reformatting main memory (not hardwired memory)	15

Situation

Each additional pip of skill, specialization, or attribute programmed at same time	+2
Hardwired program (cannot be deleted by reformatting)	+30
Reprogramming hardwired programs	+30
Unfamiliar with robot type	+5 or more
Familiar with robot type	-5 or more
New skill not related to kinds of tasks robot designed to undertake	+15 or more
New skill somewhat related to kinds of tasks robot designed to undertake	+10
New skill almost but not quite related to kinds of tasks robot designed to undertake	+5
Robot has limited memory capacity	+10 or more
Robot has large memory capacity	-5 or more

Modifier

Search (Perception)

When used to eavesdrop on or secretly watch an event or another character, the skill total indicates the amount of information gained from the surveillance. Use the "Observation Difficulties" table found at the beginning of this chapter. A Critical Failure could mean anything from no information obtained to being immediately spotted by the character being observed, depending on the situation.

When searching for a hidden object or person, the Difficulty is generally the hide roll used to conceal the target. Otherwise, the base Difficulty is 5, modified by the table below.

See also "Observation Skills" in this chapter for more difficulties and modifiers for this skill.

Situation

Character knows target's exact location	+0
Character knows target's approximate location	+5
Character has vague information about the target or its location	+15
Character has only general idea of what she's looking for; searching for small objects	+20
Character has no idea what she's looking for; searching for obscure or tiny objects	+25
Searching for microscopic objects*	+30

Modifier

*Might not be possible without special equipment or abilities.

When attempting to track someone, the base Difficulty is 10 or the target's *Sneak* roll, if the target is actively trying to hide her trail. Characters can also use search to shadow a target.

Condition

Trail is a day old	+3
Trail is a few days old	+6
Trail is a week old	+9
Tracking during inclement weather	+6
Soft dirt, mud, snow	-3
Grassland	+0
Forest, thin crowd	+3
Rain forest, dense crowd	+6
Desert, arctic wasteland, hard surface	+9
Number of people being tracked (for every 2 people)	-3
Tracking a wheeled vehicle	-6
Per additional vehicle	-3

Modifier

Security (Technical)

Opening locks that don't require deftness of hand fall under this skill, as does setting up a defensive perimeter and installing a security system. Security always requires special tools, which might give their own bonus. This skill can complement investigation when trying to survey the security of a building.

Type of System	Difficulty
No special protection	4
Regular security system	8
High-quality system	14
Bank	20
High-security complex	25
Cutting-edge security measures	30

Shields (Mechanical)

See the "*Space Travel*" chapter for details on employing this skill.

Sleight of Hand (Agility)

The Difficulty for a sleight of hand attempt is usually the opponent's *Perception* or *Search*, either as a die roll (if the opponent is actively watching for tricks) or as a derived value equal ...

Situation	Modifier
Watchful target; few distractions	+9
Observant target; light crowd	+6
Suspicious target	+3
Challenging act (such as palming a baseball)	+6 or more
Unobservant target; target constantly jostled; major distractions	-9
Confused or distracted target; crowded conditions; minor distractions	-6
Simple act (such as palming a tiny object or sliding a hand into one's own pocket unnoticed)	-6 or more

Characters also may use sleight of hand to pick locks, but they may not attempt to do so without some kind of tools (hairpins, wire coat hanger, telekinesis, etc.). Improvised tools do not add to character's skill roll, but specialized tools will.

Type of Lock	Difficulty
Simple key lock	6
Complex key lock	12
Combination lock	18

Lock Condition	Modifier
Poorly constructed	-6
Well constructed	+2
Military or security style	+6
High security style	+9
Lock blueprints and diagrams	-4

Stamina (Strength)

Galaxy Master (GM)s may allow a character to make a multi-action stamina roll to complement a

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strenuous activity, such as lifting or running. The Difficulty equals 5 times the current fatigue modifier. The character may add one-half (rounded up) of the difference between the successful stamina roll and the Difficulty. The strenuous activity still receives the fatigue modifier.

Whenever a character fails a stamina roll, she is fatigued; all actions are at -1D for every stamina check failed until the character rests for as long as she exerted herself.

Characters can still continue if they are fatigued, until they fail a third stamina check. At this point, the character is completely exhausted and must rest for twice the amount of time that she exerted herself to remove the penalty.

To avoid the effects of a toxin (inhaled, ingested, or absorbed) or disease (encountered in any manner), a character makes a stamina roll. Several factors figure into the Difficulty of the attempt, including the deadliness and dosage of the poison in question. For example, a fatal bout of botulism has a Difficulty of 9, while a killing dose of cyanide has a Difficulty of 42. Characters may attempt to counter toxins once per day.

Galaxy Master (GM)s might also call for stamina rolls against falling asleep or unconscious. Resisting sleep is a Difficulty of 5 per hour beyond the normal awake time, modified by environmental factors (too warm or too cold, noise level, etc.). For unconsciousness caused by wounds, see the "Wound Levels" table in the "Damage" chapter.

Streetwise (Knowledge)

Streetwise helps characters get around urban environments. Some situations call for seeking out those living outside the local law, while others can be handled through upstanding citizens. Generally, the modifiers are the same for each situation, but the Galaxy Master (GM) should adjust them depending on the circumstances. It is possible, though generally unlikely, that a character would be well-liked by both upstanding residents and local criminals.

Example: In a village, a character would find it easier to gather information about a particular person (and thus the city-size modifier would be -15 instead of +15), but he might have a harder time getting someone to trust him enough to tell him about it (making the tolerance modifier +15).

Seeking...

Things that are usually easy to find

Things that require discretion or careful investigation

Risky services; finding illegal and well-regulated items

Services of unusual skills; finding dangerous or carefully controlled items

A specific criminal in hiding; finding items whose possession means immediate imprisonment

Difficulty

4

7

14

18

28

Example

Directions to the nearest police station

Asking if the local law is straight or crooked

Finding out an appropriate bribe for the local law

Seeking a fence or a safecracker

Size of City

Large city (one million or more citizens)

Small city (several hundred thousand citizens)

Town (several thousand citizens)

Village (several hundred citizens)

Modifier

0

+5

+10

+15

Amount of Law Enforcement or Tolerance of Residents

Marital law or no tolerance for criminals or outsiders

Criminal activity overlooked as long as it's discreet; slight tolerance of outsiders

Modifier

+15

+10

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Criminal activity overlooked as long as it's not dangerous to the general public; tolerance of outsiders	+5
Criminal activity overlooked as long as it's not dangerous to the local government; outsiders welcome	+0
Anarchy; outsiders given same respect as residents	-10

Reputation of Seeker

Never been to the location; no contacts; not trusted by local underworld or residents	+10 or more
Rarely visited; only passing knowledge of how the local underworld operates	+1 - 9
Minor contacts; knows what to avoid; criminals or residents have no reason not to trust character	+0
Somewhat favorably known by local underworld or residents; several contacts	-1 - 9
Well-known and liked by underworld or residents	-10 or more

Survival (Knowledge)

Character can rely on survival to figure out what to eat, where to sleep, how best to deal with native dangers, and other information needed to get out of wilderness situation alive. (Use *Streetwise* for help in urban situations.)

Situation	Difficulty
Woods	4
High mountains, ocean (near floor)	12
Desert, ocean (near surface)	15
Polar region	18
different, non-Earth-like dimension or planet	25
Space	35

Situation	Skill Modifier
Has been to this location frequently	+10
Has been to this location within the past 10 years	+0
Has never been to this location	-10

Tactics (Knowledge)

Tactics represents a character's skill in deploying military forces and maneuvering them for the best advantage. Characters can rely on it for general knowledge of how best to stage a military operation or the best response to an opponent's move in battle. Tactics attempts can complement command and combat rolls for the group the character advises. The better the result, the more details a Galaxy Master (GM) should give to help the character win the battle. Hints can take the form of reminders about different moves the enemy can make, suggestions on how to maneuver the character's forces, or (for especially good rolls) risky and unanticipated moves that could throw the enemy off guard.

Nonetheless, characters should keep in mind that tactics might suggest a theoretically optimum solution, but the execution might not come off as well as planned.

Tactics difficulties should be based on various factors of complexity within a battle: how many units are involved, the setting (empty space, asteroid field, planetary terrain), and the difference in training and equipment between units (battleships versus in-system defenders; trained mercenaries versus primitive natives; space military versus experienced rebels).

Throwing (Agility)

A character's ability to grab projectiles out of the air is enhanced by the throwing skill. The Difficulty of catching an object is typically the thrower's throwing roll. If the thrower wants the catcher to get the

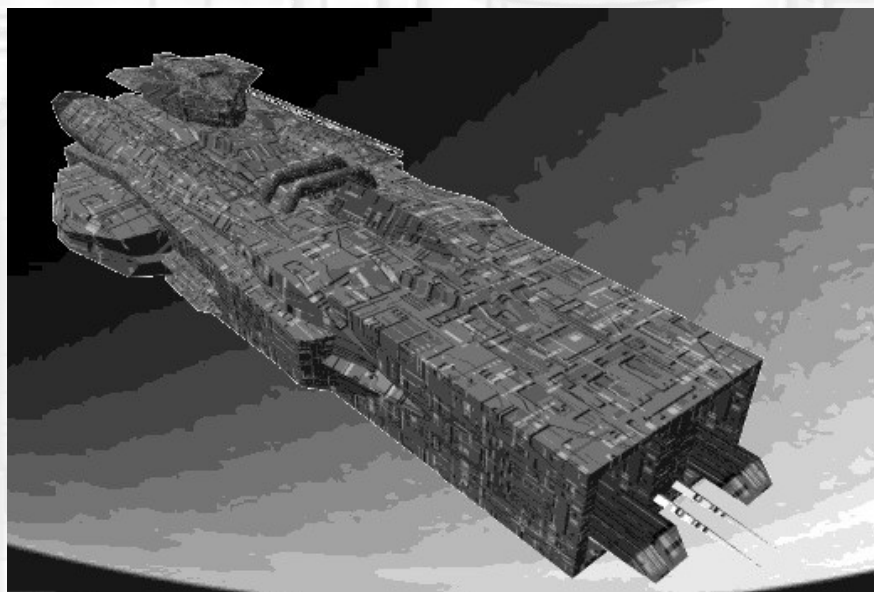
object, and thus takes care to throw well, reduce the thrower's skill total by 9.

The "Combat" chapter specifies combat difficulties for this skill.

Willpower (Knowledge)

Willpower is generally used to resist interaction attempts and mentally damaging attacks. See the "Mental Defense" sidebar at the beginning of this chapter for details. Characters with this skill may generally use it instead of stamina to resist fatigue, sleep, and unconsciousness, though there may be some situations the Galaxy Master (GM) restricts its substitution. See the stamina entry in this chapter for information on difficulties.

Galaxy Master (GM)s can also use willpower (or Knowledge) to determine the reactions of players' and Galaxy Master (GM)'s characters to each other and to their surroundings. The more the Galaxy Master (GM) believes that the character should be at ease or frightened, the greater the Difficulty. Use the descriptions of standard difficulties to determine the level. This passive application of willpower is not an action.



Terran starship design is an art that dates back to the earliest days of spaceflight. Modern vessels share a similar overall layout with their ancient brethren.

GENERIC CHARACTERS

People

Bounty Hunter

Agility 3D, brawling 3D+2, dodge 3D+1, firearms 3D+2, melee combat 3D+1, Strength 3D, Knowledge 3D, survival 3D+1, Perception 3D, investigation 3D, sneak 3D, Mechanical 3D, Technical 3D Move: 10. Strength Damage: 2D. Fate Points: 0. Character Points: 2. Body Points: 14/Wound levels: 2. Equipment: knife (damage +1D); blaster pistol (damage 5D); protective vest (Armor Value +2).

Law Enforcement Officer

Agility 3D+2, firearms 4D+2, dodge 4D+1, melee combat 4D, Strength 3D, Knowledge 3D, bureaucracy 3D+1, security regulations 4D, Perception 3D, investigation 3D+1, search 3D+1, Mechanical 2D+2, Technical 2D+2, security 3D. Move: 10. Strength Damage: 2D. Fate Points: 0. Character Points: 2. Body Points: 13/Wound levels: 2. Equipment: blaster pistol (damage 5D); body armor (Armor Value +1D).

Merchant

Agility 3D, Strength 2D+2, Knowledge 3D+1, bureaucracy 3D+2, business 3D+2, cultures 3D+2, languages 3D+2, Perception 3D+1, bargain 4D, con 3D+2, Mechanical 2D+2, vehicle operation 3D, Technical 3D. Move: 10. Strength Damage: 1D. Fate Points: 0. Character Points: 2. Body Points: 12/Wound levels: 2. Equipment: fine clothing; hand comp; various currency; goods for sale.

Soldier

Agility 3D+2, brawling 4D, dodge 4D, firearms 5D+2, Strength 3D+1, Knowledge 2D+2, security regulations 3D, Perception 3D, search 3D+1, Mechanical 2D+2, Technical 2D+2, demolitions 3D+2. Move: 10. Strength Damage: 2D. Fate Points: 0. Character Points: 2. Body Points: 14/Wound levels: 2. Equipment: blaster pistol (damage 5D); grenades (damage 6D; 2 units); protective vest (Armor Value +2).

Thug

Agility 3D, brawling 4D, firearms 3D+1, dodge 3D+2, melee combat 3D, Strength 3D, lift 4D, stamina 3D+2, Knowledge 3D, intimidation 3D+2, streetwise 3D+2, Perception 3D, Mechanical 1D, Technical 1D. Move: 10. Strength Damage: 2D. Fate Points: 0. Character Points: 2. Body Points: 13/Wound levels: 2. Equipment: energy knife (damage +1D); protective vest (Armor Value +2).

Animals

Characters may also interact with animals from time to time. Remember that, although clever, most animals are not as intelligent as Humans are. They don't actively use skills, though they may have some to represent their unconscious use of them, such as willpower to resist being told what to do. They may have Technical attribute of 0D. A Mechanical attribute of 1D indicates that the animal has the capacity to be trained to push buttons. Animals usually decide on the best course of action that will lead to their own survival, unless they are trained otherwise.

Cat, Domestic

Agility 3D, brawling 4D, dodge 4D, running 3D, Strength 1D, climb/jump 4D, Knowledge 1D, willpower 3D, Perception 2D, search 3D, sneak 4D, Mechanical 1D, Technical 0D. Move: 20. Strength Damage 1D. Body Points: 10/Wound levels: 1. Natural Abilities: claws (damage +2), teeth (damage +2); small size (scale modifier 6).

Cat, Large (Lion, Tiger, Puma)

Agility 4D, brawling 5D, dodge 5D, running 5D, Strength 4D, climb/jump 5D, Knowledge 1D, intimidation 5D, willpower 3D, Perception 2D, search 3D, sneak 5D, Mechanical 1D, Technical 0D. Move: 30. Body Points: 18/Wound levels: 2. Strength Damage: 2D. Natural Abilities: thick fur (armor value +2), claws (damage +1D), teeth (damage +1D). Note: Large cats can leap up to 30 feet horizontally or six feet vertically; small size (scale modifier 2).

Dog, Domestic

Agility 3D, brawling 4D, dodge 4D, running 4D, Strength 3D, Knowledge 1D, intimidation 3D, willpower 2D+1, Perception 2D, search 4D, Mechanical 1D, Technical 0D. Move: 25. Strength Damage: 2D. Body Points: 14/Wound levels: 1. Natural Abilities: teeth (damage +1D); small size (scale modifier 5).

Dog, Guard

Agility 3D, brawling 5D, dodge 6D, running 4D, Strength 4D, Knowledge 1D, intimidation 5D, willpower 4D, Perception 2D, search 4D, Mechanical 1D, Technical 0D. Move: 25. Strength Damage: 2D. Body Points: 18/Wound levels: 2. Natural Abilities: teeth (damage +1D); small size (scale modifier 4).

Rats

Agility 3D, acrobatics 3D+1, brawling 4D, dodge 3D, running 3D+2, Strength 1D, climb/jump 3D, swim 1D+2, Knowledge 1D, willpower 2D, Perception 2D, hide: self only 4D, search 3D, Mechanical 1D, Technical 0D. Move: 3. Strength Damage: 1D. Body Points: 6/Wound levels: 1. Natural Abilities: teeth (Strength Damage only); swarm attack (roll a single brawling total for entire group of rats, adding +5 to the total for every 10 creatures involved; if using the optional damage bonus, add the bonus for this roll to the Strength Damage of a single rat); small size (scale modifier 9 for single rat).

SAMPLE RACES AND CHARACTER TYPES OF THE *AD 10,000* ERA*

**Please note that some sample character packages are provided in this section, but in general this is just an overview of a few of the types of beings that populate the Astral Empires universe during the 10,000 AD era. Additional character types are outlined in the "Great Galactic Wars" sourcebook.*

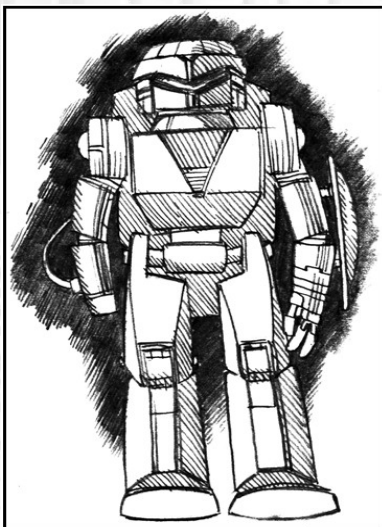
XENO LEGIONARY

The Xeno Legions are considered to be the greatest force for good in this corner of the Mosaic Galaxy, at least according to all of their recruiting materials. Drawn from dozens of widely differing species, the Legions serve as the ground forces of the Fleetworlds during the 10,000 AD era.

While a Xeno Legionary can be any of a number of races, they all possess a somewhat common skill set and physical profile due to the need for some level of homogeneous traits on the battlefield. Creatures with eight arms and two prehensile mandibles have a hard time using the same equipment as baseline humans, for example.

All Legionaries are well-trained in the combat arts, and maintain high ratings in the use of small arms and fighting vehicles. They are also extremely principled and capable of great acts of heroism. Typically, Legionaries will possess noticeably higher stats in the physical categories than other members of their race, as well as slightly higher mental capabilities. As the process for joining the Xeno Legions is somewhat selective, Legionaries are often the "cream of the crop" from their respective worlds.

(NOTE: Xeno Legionaries are the most advanced available PCs for the Fleetworlds in standard play. They are comparable to the Gladiator warriors of the Axis. As such, they are common characters but should still be somewhat restricted unless they are undertaking the dangerous missions they were commissioned for. Otherwise, they may overpower a given scenario.)



ASTRAL EMPIRES-THE RPG-OPEN D6 EDITION

XENO LEGIONARY STANDARD STAT RANGES

Character Name:

Occupation: Xeno Legionary

Species:

Gender:

Physical Description:

Description: The Legions are your life. Your species sends warriors to serve with the Xeno Legions in the service of the Commonwealth just as they have for centuries. You know little of the outside world beyond the realm of the military life. Yet, you have dreams and aspirations of your own. Torn between helping in the coming struggle and a desire to strike out on your own you are caught up in both war and peace looking for something more.

Agility	4D
Brawling	—
Dodge	—
Firearms	—
Flying / Zero-G	—
Melee Combat	—
Running	—
Throwing	—
Strength	4D
Climb / Jump	—
Lift	—
Stamina	—
Swim	—
Knowledge	2D+1
Aliens	—
Astrography	—
Intimidation	—
Languages	—
Scholar	—
Streetwise	—
Survival	—
Willpower	—
Metaphysics	0D
Mechanical	2D+2
Comm	—
Exoskeleton Operation	—
Gunnery	—
Navigation	—
Piloting	—
Sensors	—
Shields	—
Vehicle Operation	—
Perception	2D+2
Command	—
Con	—
Persuasion	—

Search	—
Sneak	—
Technical	2D+1
Armor Repair	—
Comp. Interface/Repair	—
Demolitions	—
Exoskeleton Repair	—
Firearms Repair	—
Flight Systems Repair	—
Gunnery Repair	—
Medicine	—
Personal Equip. Repair	—
Vehicle Repair	—

Advantages: None

Disadvantages: None

Special Abilities: None

Equipment: Serrated combat knife (damage +1D+2) with compass in handle; powered armor (Armor Value +3D+2); blaster rifle (damage 7D; range 25/150/300; ammo 30); med-kit (+1D to medicine rolls; includes spare supplies); cred-key; miscellaneous supplies and keepsakes from homeworld

Fate Points	1
Character Points	5
Funds	3D
Credits	525
Strength Damage	2D
Move	10
Body Points	35
Body Points	Range
Stunned	21–28
Wounded	15–20
Severely Wounded	7–14
Incapacitated	3–6
Mortally Wounded	1–2
Dead	0

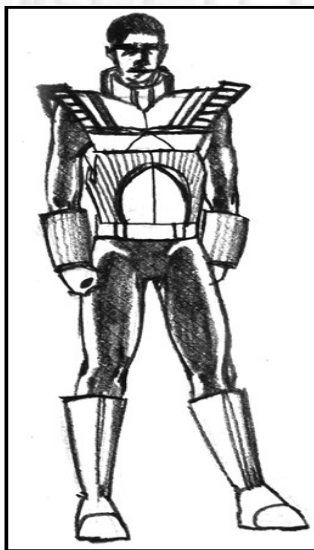
FLEETWORLDS SPACER

A spacer (aka "stellar mariner") is a being who works on and around deep space interstellar vessels. They often assist in the operation and maintenance of any number of starships during a career. The term "spacer" can apply to professional stellar mariners, personnel working in military environments, and even recreational space-dwellers who live aboard privately operated craft.

Professional spacers typically live on the margins of interstellar society, as they spend most of their lives in the deepest, darkest places in space. They often live in cramped, uncomfortable and often dangerous conditions aboard ship. Yet for some reason humans and aliens alike still go to space to seek their fortunes. For some spacers, the primary attraction of this career is a life unbound by the restraints of planet-side existence. Deep space represents an adventure and an opportunity to see the wonders of the galaxy.

Whatever the reason, those who live among the stars invariably have to deal with isolation from their homeworlds and families. For that reason, spacers often form strong bonds amongst themselves and create ties that endure long after their term of service has ended.

(NOTE: Spacers can come from any one of dozens of sapient races. They are typically average in all of their stats at the beginning of their training term and tend to acquire additional skills and abilities as they serve. Etymologically, the name "spacer" preserves a memory of the ancient time period when humanity first took to space. However, it is an appropriate name for any being making a living amongst the stars.)



FLEETWORLDS SPACER STANDARD STAT RANGES

Character Name:

Occupation: Fleetworlds Spacer

Species: Human

Gender:

Physical Description:

Description: You always wanted to leave your homeworld and see the stars. Well, now you have your wish. Although the training wasn't all you thought it would be you're now serving on a vessel of the Unified Fleet. You had hoped you'd have a chance to travel throughout the Settled Worlds and see the wonders of the galaxy, but now everyone's talking about a war with those on the far side of the Great Divide. Looks like you're going to be busy for a while...

Agility 3D+1

Acrobatic _____

Brawling _____

Dodge _____

Firearm _____

Melee Combat _____

Running _____

Sleight of Hand _____

Throwing _____

Strength 3D+1

Climb/Jump _____

Lift _____

Stamina _____

Swim _____

Knowledge 2D+2

Aliens _____

Astrography _____

Bureaucracy _____

Business _____

Cultures _____

Intimidation _____

Languages _____

Scholar _____

Security Regulation _____

Streetwise _____

Survival _____

Willpower _____

Metaphysics 0D

Mechanical 2D+1

Comm _____

Gunnery _____

Navigation _____

Piloting _____

Vehicle Operation _____

Perception 3D+1

Bargain _____

Con _____

Forgery _____

Gambling _____

Hide _____

Investigation _____

Know-How _____

Persuasion _____

Search _____

Sneak _____

Technical 3D

Armor Repair _____

Comp. Interface/Repair _____

Demolitions _____

Firearms Repair _____

Medicine _____

Personal Equip. Repair _____

Robot Interface/Repair _____

Security _____

Advantages: Authority: Law (Rank 1), Wealth (Rank 1) as spacer pay during wartime tends to accrue very quickly

Disadvantages: Sense of Duty (Rank 2), Winning this war is going to require the best performance possible by all involved and that's what you've been trained to do regardless of your personal feelings.

Special Abilities: None

Equipment: Light protective fleet suit (Armor Value +1D), enviro-suit, hand computer (for doing your duty aboard ship)

Fate Points 1

Character Points 5

Funds 3D

Credits 525

Strength Damage 2D

Move 10

Body Points 27

Body Points **Range**

Stunned 16-22

Wounded 10-15

Severely Wounded 5-9

Incapacitated 2-4

Mortally Wounded 1

Dead 0

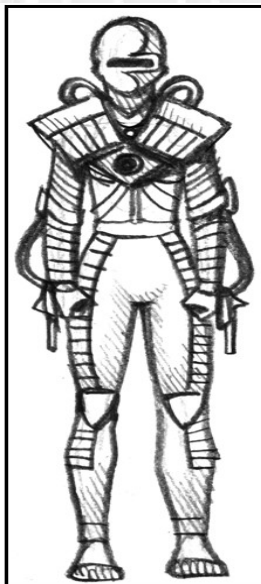
XENOARCHEOLOGIST

Space is big... Really big... And throughout the mind-blowing depths of space are found worlds filled with ancient artifacts of previous races who once traversed the void. It is the Xenoarcheologist who travels from world to world identifying the various pieces of history left behind by the ancient races and who tries to piece together the past.

Xenoarcheologists represent most of the major species of interplanetary life, but usually retain the traits of their species, both good and bad. For the more aggressive races, their Xenoarcheologists may be searching for powerful weapons built by one of the ancient Precursor races, while species focused more on acquiring knowledge will undertake quests for information about the now forgotten epochs of the galaxy. Regardless of their intentions, beings in this discipline play an important part in unraveling the past and creating a future for the galaxy, for which they are granted a certain kind of respect for their efforts.

Xenoarcheologists may represent a single race, the Unified Fleet itself, or even a distant academy of the Galactic Assembly. Or they may only represent themselves...

(NOTE: This character class will obviously offer some interesting non-military campaign options, but can also be used in military operations for "artifact rooning" in hopes of discovering ancient technologies that might benefit a particular planet or alliance. In general, Xenoarcheologists will be focused on their intellectual development rather than their physical capabilities, but that is not always the case.)



ASTRAL EMPIRES-THE RPG-OPEN D6 EDITION

XENOARCHEOLOGIST STANDARD STAT RANGES

Character Name:

Occupation: Xenoarcheologis/Cultural Expert

Species:

Gender:

Physical Description:

Description: Somewhere when you were young you picked up a love for ancient galactic culture. You read holo-books about the golden centuries of the Galactic Federacy and longed to stand upon the shores of that mythical world of Old Terra you've heard so much about in the legends. Now it's your time. You get to ply the deep-space lanes aboard chartered vessels en route to sifting through the ruins of civilizations dead for thousands of years. But now the military brass wants to give you a new mission; finding artifacts of military value. This coming war must be a serious, although you've never much paid attention to galactic politics yourself...

Agility 2D+2
Brawling —
Dodge —
Firearm —
Running —
Sleight of Hand —

Strength 2D+1

Knowledge 3D
Aliens —
Bureaucracy —
Business —
Cultures —
Intimidation —
Languages —
Scholar —
Streetwise —
Willpower —

Metaphysics 0D

Mechanical 3D
Comm —
Navigation —
Sensors —

Perception 3D+2
Bargain —
Command —
Con —
Forgery —
Gambling —
Hide —
Investigation —
Persuasion —

Search —
Sneak —

Technical 2D+1
Comp. Interface/Repair —
Medicine —
Personal Equip. Repair —

Advantages: Cultures (R1), you have a knack for drawing parallels between known and unusual cultures and a deep and profound understanding of ancient galactic history

Disadvantages: Handicap: Trick Shoulder (R1), +1 to melee combat, climb/jump, and throwing difficulties

Special Abilities: None

Equipment: Hand computer with communication link; data wands with information about numerous languages and cultures (+1D to aliens, cultures, and languages attempts); personal blaster (damage 3D; range 4/8/12; ammo 6) with 2 spare energy cells (ammo 6 each); cred-key, enviro-suit

Fate Points 1
Character Points 5
Funds 3D
Credits 525
Strength Damage 1D
Move 10
Body Points 26

Body Points **Range**
 Stunned 15-20
 Wounded 10-14
 Severely Wounded 5-9
 Incapacitated 2-4
 Mortally Wounded 1
 Dead 0

INDEPENDENT SURVEYOR

Even though the Mosaic Galaxy was fairly well explored during the time of the Galactic Federacy, the loss of so much knowledge during the fall of that ancient power has led to a drive for re-mapping the heavens. To that end, many brave souls have made their fortunes charting the depths of space and selling the information they uncover to those who need it.

Stellar surveying is the science of accurately determining the three-dimensional space position of hyperspatial jump points and the distances and angles between them in order to transit between star systems. These points are usually quite difficult to find, but can be located using a mix of sensors and instinct.

Because of the nature of deep space, surveyors often get lost or encounter ancient wonders (and horrors) that stagger the imagination. Because it is a fairly solitary endeavor, surveyors often find it difficult to make friends and indeed may find their closest companions to be the robots and computers that assist them in their searches. Occasionally, however, a surveyor will hire on with a freighter crew brave enough to transit into uncharted space. That is often a source for wonderful adventures that stagger the mind...

In order to accomplish their objectives, surveyors use elements of stellar geometry, quantum engineering, astral mathematics, advanced physics, and interstellar law. Thus, they are typically both very intelligent and very adventurous. For that reason, their mental and education stats are often significantly above average and they usually receive bonuses in traits like Astrogation, Piloting and Computers.

NOTE: Surveyors tend to be well-balanced physically/mentally-gifted individuals due to the unique needs of the job.



ASTRAL EMPIRES-THE RPG-OPEN D6 EDITION

INDEPENDENT SURVEYOR STANDARD STAT RANGES

Character Name:

Occupation: Independent Surveyor

Species:

Gender:

Physical Description:

Description: Your work is important to the renaissance in the Mosaic Galaxy that has taken place over the past nine centuries. It is you and others in your line of work that map the deep space routes and determine the safest paths of travel for interstellar commerce. Yet, at times you tire of working by yourself with only occasional contact with others of your species, or any species for that matter. You hope you're making a difference. But what of this looming conflict you keep hearing about from the spacers you encounter?

Agility 2D+2
Brawling —
Dodge —
Firearms —
Flying / 0-G —
Melee Combat —

Strength 2D+1
Climb / Jump —
Lift —
Stamina —

Knowledge 4D+2
Aliens —
Astrography —
Intimidation —
Languages —
Security Regulations —
Survival —
Tactics —
Willpower —

Metaphysics 0D

Mechanical 3D+2
Comm —
Gunnery —
Navigation —
Piloting —
Sensors —
Shields —
Vehicle Operation —

Perception 2D+2
Command —
Con —
Investigation —
Persuasion —
Search —
Sneak —

Technical 3D
Armor Repair —
Comp. Interface/Repair —
Exoskeleton Repair —
Firearms Repair —
Flight Systems Repair —
Gunnery Repair —
Medicine —
Personal Equip. Repair —
Vehicle Repair —

Advantages: Ship (R4), you have the use of a space service ship

Disadvantages: Age (R1), you're almost past your prime; Advantage Flaw (R3), your ship has problems — see the equipment description; Employed (R2), you only get the use of the ship while you remain in service

Special Abilities: None

Equipment: Military scout ship (owned by the military; less-than-mint condition; on any Critical Failure with ship system, the ship shuts down and requires a repair roll for that system against a difficulty of 16 to get it running again); worn Plastovar armor (Armor Value +1D+1); laser pistol (damage 4D; range 25/75/150; ammo 15); standard comlink; standard enviro-suit; cred-key, enviro-suit

Fate Points 1
Character Points 5
Funds 3D
Credits 525
Strength Damage 1D
Move 10
Body Points 28

Body Points **Range**
 Stunned 16–22
 Wounded 11–15
 Severely Wounded 5–10
 Incapacitated 2–4
 Mortally Wounded 1
 Dead 0

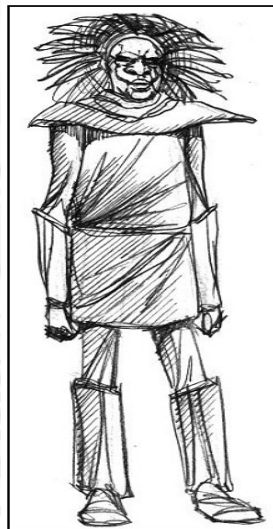
ARISTOCRATIC NOBILITY

Much more common in the Axis sphere due to the influence of the once-powerful Aristocratic League, the presence of the upper classes is seen in various ways throughout space.

Even though they may not have much experience themselves, the nobles often are willing to finance expeditions or operations where they believe their own prestige or power will be enhanced. Despite the increasing control the Axis exerts over the Aristocratic League, the nobles still believe that their power is secure, even as the Crimson OverLord continues to draw more control to himself... or *itself*? Many of the upper crust wait for a time when the lower classes will rise up against the Axis and beg for the aristocracy to regain their rightful place. Whether that will ever happen or is just a figment of the collective nobility imagination remains to be seen.

Nobles are found in the hierarchies of many worlds, both in the Axis sphere and the Fleetworlds. The Primean Commonwealth itself retains a constitutional monarchy, while the Colonial Union eschews conventional feudalism for an ancient set of principles called democracy.

(NOTE: Nobles are typically below average in terms of both physical and mental abilities for their respective races. However, there are notable exceptions as some aristocratic families give their members the highest level of training available in all the martial and intellectual disciplines.)



Nobles can be of almost any species, background, or personality so players may customize to their heart's content. See the "Great Galactic Wars" sourcebook for additional information.

ALPHA MARINE

Created thousands of years ago by humanity during the earliest steps into space, the Alpha Marines are the toughest warriors in space... At least to hear them tell it. As an organization founded to fight various barbaric xenoform horrors, the Alpha Marines have had to be a powerful force from the beginning in order for mankind to even survive into the modern age.

In the first few centuries of starflight, humanity encountered wave after wave of vicious xenoroaches (the settled on term for these "bug aliens") and the Alpha Marines were the first in/last out during nearly all of the operations to negate this threat. As humanity increased in power throughout space, the Alpha Marines grew in stature and eventually became something of a Praetorian Guard for the Galactic Federacy. As the Federacy fell, around AD 7,000, all of the surviving Alpha Marines were placed into cryosleep. It was only the rediscovery of the Alpha Marine sanctuaries in the past century that has returned this force to the service of humanity, now fighting against the cyborg/alien might of the Axis.

Alpha Marines belong to another time and place, and they know it. Some have been in and out of cryosleep so many times that they date from the first millennium of human starflight. For that reason, they are a wealth of information about the past, and yet strangely detached from current galactic sociological concerns. Are they truly on the side of the Unified Fleet? Or just fighting for the power they believe to be the heir to their ancient Federacy?

(NOTE: Alpha Marines are the apex of non-cyborg ground forces in the AD 10,000 era. They do, however, face communications difficulties with modern galactic society because they are anachronisms dating back four thousand years or more. This sense of detachment is key in using them in a campaign.)



ALPHA MARINE STANDARD STAT RANGES

Character Name:

Occupation: Alpha Marine

Species: Human (unmodified)

Gender:

Physical Description:

Description: You're old. Thousands of years old. But you don't look it, mostly because you've been in cryosleep or in near-light ready reserve during most of that time. You see, humanity only thaws you out when they want to use you for your fighting ability. But these days you don't even speak the same language. All you know is there is yet another war coming and yet another opportunity to save mankind. But is it worth it? Are these even *your* people anymore?

Agility	4D
Brawling	—
Dodge	—
Firearms	—
Running	—
Sleight of Hand	—
Throwing	—
Strength	3D
Climb / Jump	—
Knowledge	2D+2
Bureaucracy	—
Business	—
Intimidation	—
Security Regulations	—
Streetwise	—
Survival	—
Metaphysics	0D
Mechanical	2D
Comm	—
Exoskeleton Operation	—
Gunnery	—
Navigation	—
Piloting	—
Sensors	—
Shields	—
Vehicle Operation	—
Perception	3D+2
Artist	—
Bargain	—
Command	—
Con	—
Forgery	—
Gambling	—
Hide	—
Investigation	—
Know-How	—
Persuasion	—
Search	—

<i>Sneak</i>	—
Technical	3D+2
Armor Repair	—
Comp. Interface/Repair	—
Demolitions	—
Exoskeleton Repair	—
Firearms Repair	—
Flight Systems Repair	—
Gunnery Repair	—
Medicine	—
Personal Equip. Repair	—
Robot Interface/Repair	—
Security	—
Vehicle Repair	—

Advantages: None

Disadvantages: Quirk (R1), You lack the ability to communicate with your fellow citizens as you are literally thousands of years behind galactic cultural development

Special Abilities: Fast Reactions (R1), +1D to Perception when determining initiative and get 1 additional action 3 times per adventure

Equipment: archaic battle rifle (damage 6D; range 20/50/200; ammo 30); powered battle armor(Armor Value +3D+1); blaster pistol (damage 5D; range 20/50/150; ammo 12); comm gear (range 100 km);

Fate Points	1
Character Points	5
Funds	3D
Credits	525
Strength Damage	2D
Move	10
Body Points	35
Body Points	Range
Stunned	21–28
Wounded	15–20
Severely Wounded	7–14
Incapacitated	3–6
Mortally Wounded	1–2
Dead	0

BETATROOPER

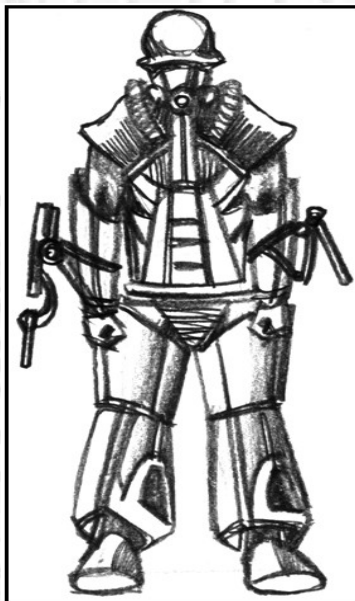
BetaTroopers are the standard ground soldiers representing the planet-side component of the Unified Fleet interstellar military forces. They are considered occupation soldiers rather than advanced invasion units (which is the focus of the orbital insertion specialist Alpha Marines) and are generally involved in secondary planetary surface actions.

BetaTroopers see themselves as the second tier of the second tier of combat forces for the Unified Fleet, due to the fact that warships in space tend to play the most important role in battles, and what little the ground forces are responsible for is usually dominated by the Alpha Marines or Xeno Legions. For that reason, BetaTroopers are often cynical conscripts from backwater worlds serving their time before they can strike out on their own.

That isn't to say that these soldiers are not capable combat forces, because they are. However, with lesser weaponry and armor protection, they just aren't perceived, by themselves or others, to be as elite as the other levels of ground forces. Many of them become members of the Merc Guild when they retire, using the skills they've learned in official service to finally make a decent living.

BetaTroopers are typically a little above average for their race in physical stat categories and a little below average in mental capabilities.

(NOTE: Most hoverarmor forces and even some Mekstryder units will be composed of BetaTroopers, making them a commonly encountered class of NPC in ASTRAL EMPIRES ground level skirmish games).



BETATROOPER STANDARD STAT RANGES

Character Name:

Occupation: Betatrooper

Species: Human

Gender:

Physical Description:

Description: When duty calls, you answer it. Although you are not the cream of the military crop you find it to be a good and comfortable living bearing arms throughout the Settled Worlds. When the guys up top need the best of the best, well... They call the Alpha Marines. But when it's a matter of just keeping the peace or providing a presence against pirate attacks or colonial uprisings then that's when you shine. But what's this about a "galactic war to end all galactic wars"?

Agility 3D+1
Acrobatic ____
Brawling ____
Dodge ____
Firearm ____
Melee Combat ____
Running ____
Sleight of Hand ____
Throwing ____

Strength 3D+1
Climb/Jump ____
Lift ____
Stamina ____
Swim ____

Knowledge 2D+2
Aliens ____
Astrography ____
Bureaucracy ____
Business ____
Cultures ____
Intimidation ____
Languages ____
Scholar ____
Security Regulation ____
Streetwise ____
Survival ____
Willpower ____

Metaphysics 0D

Mechanical 2D+1
Comm ____
Gunnery ____
Navigation ____
Piloting ____
Vehicle Operation ____

Perception 3D+1
Bargain ____
Con ____
Forgery ____

Gambling ____
Hide ____
Investigation ____
Know-How ____
Persuasion ____
Search ____
Sneak ____

Technical 3D
Armor Repair ____
Comp. Interface/Repair ____
Demolitions ____
Firearms Repair ____
Medicine ____
Personal Equip. Repair ____
Robot Interface/Repair ____
Security ____

Advantages: Authority: Law (Rank 1), recognized representative of the Colonial military, Wealth (Rank 1)

Disadvantages: Sense of Duty (Rank 2), you go to great lengths to accomplish your mission as unimportant as it might be

Special Abilities: None

Equipment: Heavy plate armor (Armor Value +3D), laser rifle (damage 4D+2; range 30/250/1000; ammo 20), comm-gear (range 50 km), envirosuit

Fate Points 1
Character Points 5
Funds 3D
Credits 525
Strength Damage 2D
Move 10
Body Points 33

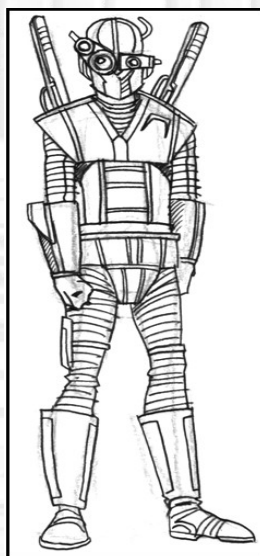
Body Points **Range**
 Stunned 19-26
 Wounded 13-18
 Severely Wounded 6-12
 Incapacitated 3-5
 Mortally Wounded 1-2
 Dead 0

JAENOVIAN SABERDANCER

The Jaenovians are one of the most persecuted races of the *AD 10,000* time period. As the descendants of a race that once threatened to annihilate humanity (approximately AD 3,000) the Jaenovians carry a great deal of hatred from most of humanity. It seems to not matter that they themselves had nothing to do with the attempt at genocide (considering it was nearly seven millenia ago) but the Jaenovians have only begun to gain wide acceptance in the past few centuries. Jaenovians themselves are lightworlders, having lived on various low-gravity moons for most of their existence as a species. Despite being humanoid in terms of their general form, Jaenovians are tall and thin, looking for all the universe like a "stretched taffy" version of a human.

The Saber dancers themselves are the top warriors in the Jaenovian sphere of influence. Trained to fight with both melee weapons and energy weapons, Saber dancers are the exceptions to the general theme of Jaenovian combat which is "keep a safe distance". To accomplish this the Jaenovians equip the Saber dancers with advanced bio-mechanical suits that enhance the strength and speed of these soldiers. Using monofilament blades the Saber dancers are amongst the best close-in swordfighters in the galaxy and their techniques have even been adapted by the Xeno Legions.

(NOTE: Without their Saber dancer suits, the Jaenovians are extremely weak in terms of physical abilities. The Saber dancer suits give them average strength and advanced speed/dexterity. The Jaenovians retain their advanced intellects regardless of the status of their equipment, however.)



GLADIATOR CYBRID

The Gladiators are the direct result of years of genetic and cyborg manipulation by the militaries of the Aristocratic League. Despite the opposition of the last Regent, the Gladiators were put into service as the primary ground forces of the Golannis Imperium.

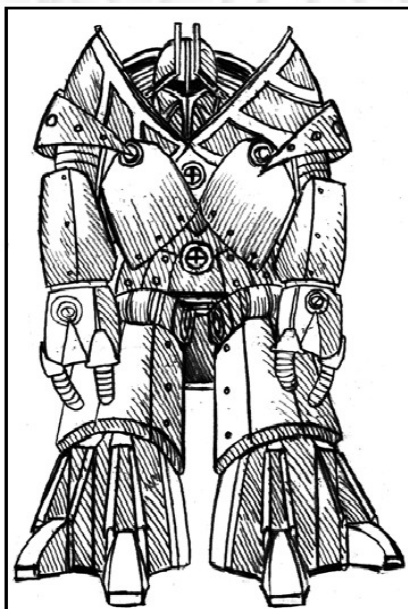
And just as so many other non-organic or semi-organic constructs have done they rebelled...

Since then, under the leadership of the strange alien being that has come to be called the Crimson WarLord, the Gladiators have seized control of the Imperium, dethroned the Regent, and declared the throneworld of Diadem as the capital of the Gladitorial Axis.

Now, with the Gladitorial Cybrids at their head, the Axis Armada is sweeping through the Settled Worlds. These powerful biomechanical warriors appear to be virtually unstoppable. Equipped with advanced internal weaponry and heavy armor these soldiers are raw nightmare fuel for the forces of the Unified Fleetworlds. Can they be stopped?

That is unknown as yet. But they *are* coming...

(NOTE: Gladiator Cybrids possess a rudimentary intelligence, but are no longer "sentient" in the traditional sense, and serve as battle thralls for the Axis. They are not meant to serve as PCs, but are including in these listings on the off-chance a Gladiator was to be, say, captured by the opposing side and reprogrammed to fight the Axis. Regardless, Cybrids have extremely high stats in the physical categories and very low ratings in mental ones.)

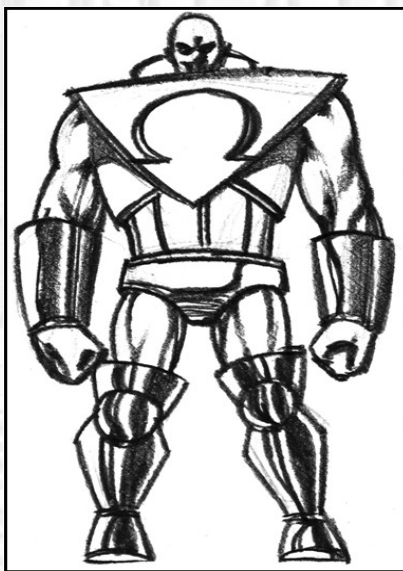


ALBARON HEAVY-WORLDER

Traitors! That is how the inhabitants of the Fleetworlds view the Albarons. It is well known that the Albarons hate the Jaenovians, and have fought a series of wars with the purpose of eradicating the Jaenovians. And frankly, they aren't the only human-descended sapient beings that want to see every last Jaenovian wiped out. However, to allow that ethnic hatred to spill over into betrayal and join up with the forces of the Axis is unconscionable. The Albarons have now become part of the fearsome Axis and are officially members of the new alliance of evil facing the Settled Worlds.

Individually, Albarons are huge, powerful humanoids due to thousands of years of development on heavy-gravity worlds. It is thought by some that their hatred of the Jaenovians is more of a heavy-world/light-world rivalry dating back to the Galactic Federacy. Albaron technology tends to run a little behind that of the rest of the Commonwealth, but their knowledge of Unified Fleet naval and ground tactics is extensive and poses a unique problem in this time of unrestricted warfare.

(NOTE: The Albarons are on the maximum end of the scale in terms of natural abilities of humans due to their heavy-world backgrounds. Other than that, individual Albarons will run the full spectrum in terms of intellect and educational training and experience.)



(Use sample Heavy Worlder in Chapter Four as a template for creating Albaron characters. Note: Remember to include Prejudice (R1) against Jaenovians and other light-worlders)

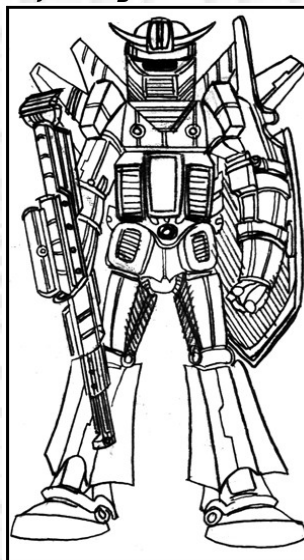
ZAKAJI CRYSTALNAUGHT

The Zakaji represent an interesting new power on the galactic scene. Emerging from the portion of the galaxy called the Silicate Hegemony, the Zakaji have apparently overthrown the Vashtari who once dominated that region and now the Zakaji control that area of space. Somehow, the Crimson WarLord has summoned them to his service and now the Zakaji represent the third part of this new enemy triad along with the Axis and Albarons.

Little is known about Zakaji culture or physiology, but it is obvious that they are a crystalline *and* humanoid civilization. How this occurred is unknown, but apparently at some point in the distant past the progenitors of the Silicate races combined some of their genetic materials with Terran-derived humanoids. The result is that the Zakaji are roughly human-shaped, but with grayish crystallized skin and a completely different philosophy of existence.

Zakaji ground force soldiers are called Crystalnaughts and are able to fight in vacuum without protective equipment (*how this is accomplished is unknown and likely will remain so until an intact Zakaji soldier is captured-which is virtually impossible as they are somehow geared to self-immolate upon ceasing life functions*). They appear well-trained in using bladed weapons (which appears to be part of their culture) but also maintain advanced armaments and weaponry far beyond what the Unified Fleet is capable of (including gravatic weapons).

(NOTE: Zakaji have high levels of dexterity, but low strength and endurance ratings. Their intelligence ratings are unknown at this point, as is much of their culture. They are not designed to be a PC at this point, but can be adapted as such with a little ingenuity. For one example, what could their motivation for joining the Axis be?)



ZAKAJI CRYSTALNAUGHT STANDARD STAT RANGES

Character Name:

Occupation:

Species: Crystalloid humanoid

Gender:

Physical Description:

Description: You are one of the chosen. Those who get to lay their lives down in the service of the Great One. What motivates you is a mystery, but you have clearly never questioned your duty. And now with conflict on the horizon the Great One has sent you to face the forces of the Settled Worlds. Will your end be with a noble end or one defined by failure?

Agility 3D
Brawling _____
Dodge _____
Firearms _____
Flying / 0-G _____
Melee Combat _____
Sleight of Hand _____
Throwing _____

Strength 2D
Climb / Jump _____
Lift _____

Knowledge 3D
Astrography _____
Business _____
Intimidation _____
Languages _____
Scholar _____
Security Regulations _____
Streetwise _____

Metaphysics 0D

Mechanical 3D
Comm _____
Gunnery _____
Piloting _____
Sensors _____
Shields _____
Vehicle Operation _____

Perception 2D
Bargain _____
Hide _____
Investigation _____
Persuasion _____
Search _____
Sneak _____

Technical 4D
Armor Repair _____
Comp. Interface/Repair _____
Demolitions _____
Exoskeleton Repair _____
Firearms Repair _____
Flight Systems Repair _____
Gunnery Repair _____
Medicine _____
Personal Equip. Repair _____
Robot Interface/Repair _____
Security _____
Vehicle Repair _____

Advantages: Natural Armor (due to crystalline physiology)

Disadvantages: Devotion (R3)-Almost any Zakaji would die in the line of duty without a second thought

Special Abilities: none

Equipment: Repair and diagnostic kit (+1D to *repair* attempts; one use per skill); blaster pistol (damage 5D; range 20/50/150; ammo 12) with 1 spare energy cell (ammo 12); syntheleather jacket (Armor Value +2); cred-key

Fate Points 1
Character Points 5
Funds 1D
Credits 525
Strength Damage 2D
Move 10
Body Points 25

Body Points **Range**
 Stunned 15-20
 Wounded 10-14
 Severely Wounded 5-9
 Incapacitated 2-4
 Mortally Wounded 1
 Dead 0

GRAGONIAN GROUNDTHUMPER

Despite their short stature and somewhat comical appearance, the Gragonians are survivors of what was once a large and profitable trading empire that stretched throughout the Settled Worlds.

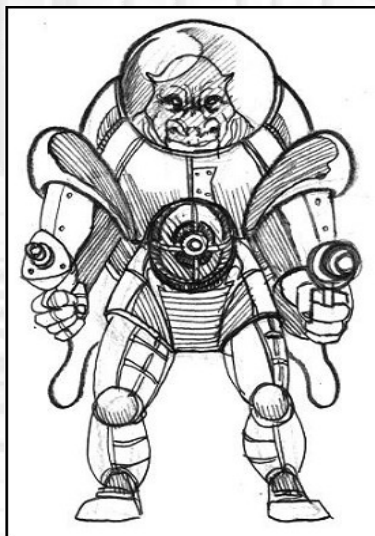
That all changed during the Trade Wars of two centuries ago when the burgeoning Commonwealth began a dramatic military campaign against the Gragonians. Over the period of a few years the Gragonian merchant fleets were reduced to almost nothing, and the conflict culminated in the destruction of the Gragonian orbital skyhook and the devastation of their homeworld's surface.

Needless to say, it didn't take much motivation for the Gragonians to join the Axis campaign against the Commonwealth and their Unified Fleet allies. And now the Gragonians are fighting with a previously unseen ferocity to avenge themselves upon their former foes.

The Gragonians are no longer a technological power, following the destruction of 200 years ago, but still maintain enough combat power to serve as thralls for the Axis. More accurately, they represent simple laser cannon fodder and a distraction for the enemies of the Axis, allowing the vastly superior Gladiators to focus on the bigger objectives.

Individually, Gragonians are somewhat small creatures, but are quite aggressive and well-suited in their roles. They have low intelligence ratings, due to their loss of technology since the end of the war with the Commonwealth.

(NOTE: Gragonians are allied with the Axis, but are focused mostly on the war with the Commonwealth, not the rest of the Unified Fleet powers).



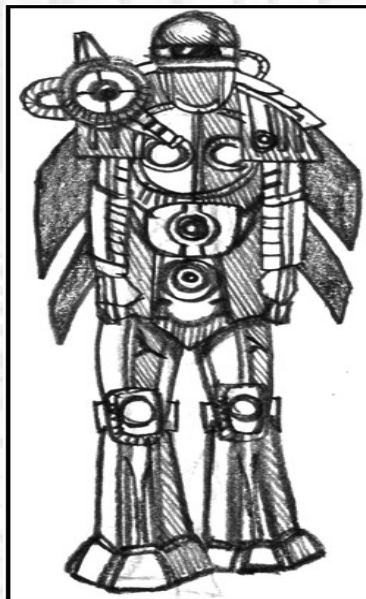
AXIS BIO-SOLDIER

In addition to the advanced Gladiator Cybrid biomechanical constructs, the Axis also operates traditional soldiers in standard combat armor. These forces are typically second line, in much the same way that the Beta Troopers serve as auxiliaries to the Alpha Marines and Xeno Legionaries in the Unified Fleet military structure. They hold territory, provide occupation forces, and ultimately do the cleanup duties the Axis front line forces can't waste time on.

The typical Bio-soldier is a conscript from one of the Imperium worlds, serving a term or two and then returning to his or her homeworld to resume normal life under the despotism of the Axis. However, the Axis does offer opportunities for experienced Bio-soldiers to become Gladiator Cybrids, even if they are severely injured or even killed in battle. Something about seeing previously dead enemies reanimated and moving across the battlefield has a deleterious effect on enemy troop morale and the Crimson WarLord is a master at exploiting such fears in opposing species.

Bio-soldier abilities are baseline average for whatever species they're from (most Imperium conscripts serving in the Axis military are drawn from human worlds). Some are incorporated into the Axis force structure from worlds of the Aristocratic League, however, and thus have a higher level of social standing outside of their military service.

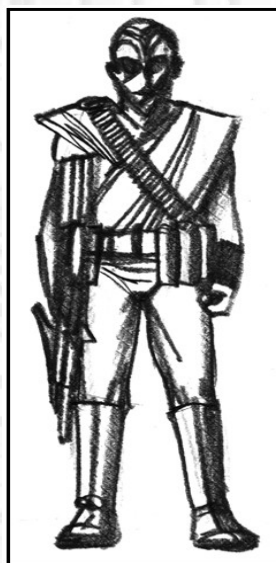
(NOTE: Bio-soldiers often have the least reason to serve the Axis and make good candidates for double agents. However, the fear of the Gladiatorial Cybrids and the Crimson WarLord himself/itself are enough to keep most low-level soldiers in line.)



D'ARRIDIAN WARRIOR

D'Arridians are inhabitants of the distant Imperium desert world of Arridia. As convicts of the Galactic Federacy, the D'Arridians were a splinter humanoid culture who were genetically enhanced and transported to a distant outpost to work on a secret project in exchange for a reduction in their sentence. The project involved the construction of self-aware machines and starships, with the purpose of building automated warships to keep the Galactic Federacy borders secure. Since the world they were sent to was so inhospitable the hedonistic Galactic Federacy culture could only get convicts to serve there, and as it was the only location with a surviving Planetary Computer, there wasn't much choice in where to place the facility. When the Galactic Federacy fell, so too did the communications network. Cut off from the rest of the galaxy during the long night, the D'Arridians created their own culture. Discovered a few centuries ago by explorers from the Golannis Imperium, the D'Arridians have reluctantly become part of interstellar dealings once again, with many serving in the Imperial Guard and some units even joining the Merc Guild. The D'Arridians represent a conundrum to the Axis. They are currently allies to the Axis, but their inherent nobleness of purpose and strength of character may eventually cause them to rethink their participation with the genocide the Axis is visiting on the Settled Worlds. For now, however, they remain loyal to the Warlord.

(NOTE: A typical D'Arridian is a top-level soldier. Raised in harsh circumstances beyond anything that most of the galactic population can understand, these genetically-enhanced warriors will give a major advantage to whomever they ultimately side with. Their physical stats are all above average for humans, and they possess average mental traits.)



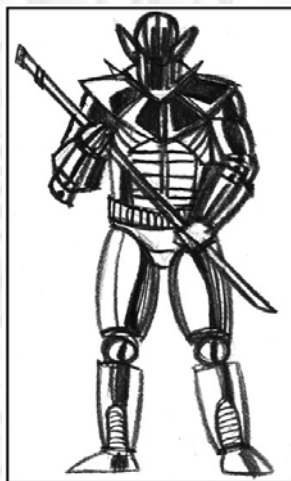
MERC GUILDER

Often retired from other military services (typically planetary guard elements and even occasionally Unified Fleet or Golannis Imperial Navy veterans) members of the Merc Guilds are the preferred "soldiers of fortune" for the galaxy. While some occasionally go on distant missions for the far-off Galactic Assembly, most Merc Guilders serve at the request of various member worlds of the Commonwealth. The planets of the Colonial Union are much less open to the Merc Guilds, eying these soldiers for hire with a great deal of mistrust.

The Merc Guilds were key in defeating the Sarlicons twenty-five years before the recent Axis incursion. For that reason, they have a great deal of trust and support among the Settled Worlds. However, rumors have spread that the Crimson WarLord and his agents are offering the Merc Guilds promises of monetary and territorial awards if they support the Axis. This has led to a loss of confidence in the Merc Guilders as well as making the Mercs themselves a tool in the struggle between the Axis and the Unified Fleet.

The average Merc Guilder is a former military being, either fleet or ground arm. They are typically well-trained, but tend to be fighting with military technology at least one level below the current state-of-the-art. In conflict on backwater worlds this isn't much of an issue, but up against a top force like the Axis Gladiators or Unified Fleet Xeno Legionaries this becomes a big problem.

(NOTE: The Merc Guilds represent somewhat of a third power in the AD 10,000 setting as whoever they throw their power to will have a significant advantage. At the same time, individual Mercs will be compelled to decide who to fight for, with the potential to fracture the Merc Brotherhood.)



XENOHEALER (PHYSICIAN)

Xenohealers are the quintessential medical personnel of the ASTRAL EMPIRES universe. In order to treat patients of a wide array of species, Xenohealers are usually trained at one of the massive medical stations commonly found throughout the Settled Worlds. These medical stations are located mostly in deep space regions, and are equipped to treat a variety of xenological lifeforms with a wide range of ailments and life-support requirements. They are operated under the auspices of the distant Galactic Assembly, a neutral government assumed to be the last vestiges of the pre-Interregnum Galactic Federacy.

Founded to promote efforts for peace after the early interstellar wars of humanity, many of these stations still function after thousands of years of the Galactic Dark Age due to the effective efforts of their Xenohealer staffers and the vagueries of time dilation (as they are generally built around known deep space gravitational anomalies and kept moving through space at relativistic velocities for protection from opportunistic races and groups who might try to raid them).

In a very real sense, the Xenohealers operate outside the normal "space-time" continuum. Thus, when they do leave their stations to visit their homeworlds it is not uncommon for long periods of time to have elapsed. For that reason, being a Xenohealer is a significant lifetime commitment, in fact several lifetime commitments. Xenohealers are drawn from many races, much like the Xeno Legionaries. They typically have average or slightly below average physical characteristics for their respective races, but much higher intelligence and educational ratings.

(NOTE: Xenohealers can come from any race, but are not usually from a notably aggressive species.)



XENOHEALER STANDARD STAT RANGES

Character Name:

Occupation: Medic

Species:

Gender:

Physical Description:

Description: You have a strong desire to help others. You have trained in the medical arts for years and served time at more than one deep space medical station. Now you need to figure out what your next move is going to be. Do you return to help your stricken homeworld, head out to the front lines of the brewing conflict where you're really needed, or sign on with a small freighter as medical specialist hoping for adventure?

Agility 2D+2

Dodge —

Firearms —

Running —

Strength 2D+1

Lift —

Stamina —

Knowledge 3D+2

Aliens —

Bureaucracy —

Cultures —

Languages —

Scholar —

Survival —

Willpower —

Metaphysics 0D

Mechanical 2D+1

Comm —

Navigation —

Sensors —

Perception 3D

Bargain —

Command —

Con —

Hide —

Investigation —

Persuasion —

Search —

Technical 4D

Comp. Interface/Repair —

Medicine —

Personal Equip. Repair —

Robot Interface/Repair —

Advantages: None

Disadvantages: Quirk (R1), you care almost too much about those you help, the loss of a patient can weigh on you for weeks

Special Abilities: None

Equipment: Med-kit (+1D to medicine first-aid attempts; five uses); personal blaster (damage 3D; range 4/8/12; ammo 6) with 2 spare energy cells (ammo 6 each); medical reader (+1D to medicine diagnostic attempts); cred-key

Fate Points 1

Character Points 5

Funds 3D

Credits 525

Strength Damage 1D

Move 10

Body Points 27

Body Points **Range**

Stunned 16–22

Wounded 10–15

Severely Wounded 5–9

Incapacitated 2–4

Mortally Wounded 1

Dead 0

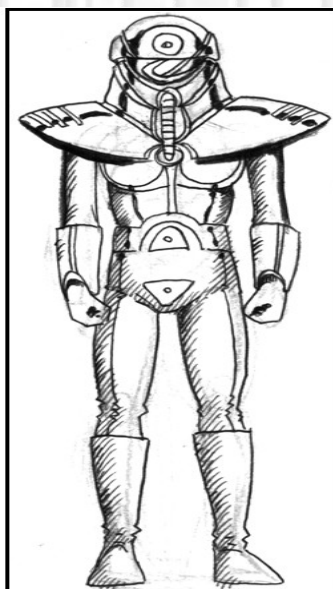
MADAI ANDROID

The Madai are one of the galaxy's many mysteries. They appear to be a race of androids and replicants, perhaps split off from their human creators in the early days of mankind's transition to the stars. It also appears that they left the human sphere of influence for deep space and founded their own colonies far beyond the worlds of man or alien. Now, they have begun to reappear in great numbers. A few have fallen in with those living among the Settled Worlds, but whether they are here for reasons of infiltration and espionage, or whether they are just drifters striking out on their own is unknown. One final point of interest is that they seem to have some relationship with the even more mysterious robotic Omnicron... but what it is exactly remains unknown.

The Madai may be the answers to the question "what happened to those early era replicants who disappeared thousands of years ago?" These beings seem to have made further improvements to their physiology and intellect over the millennia and represent something of a dilemma for humanity: Embrace them as brothers or look for sinister motives in their returns.

Madai are similar to other android-type creatures, but are unique in that they have both synthetic and organic aspects. In essence, they are both human and robotic, which raises significant moral and ethical implications. It is *not* known if they dream of electric sheep, however.

(NOTE: Generally, the Madai are advanced in both physiology and intellect (and for that reason should be somewhat restricted in most campaign settings).)

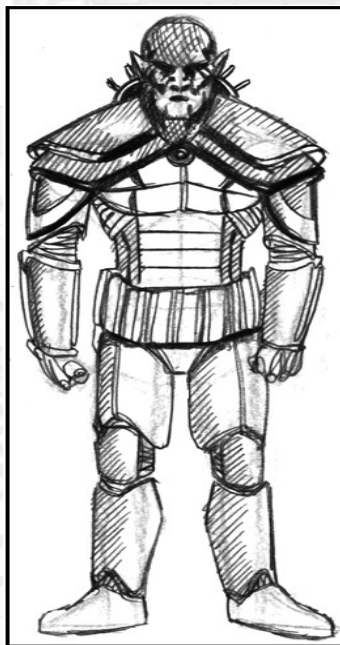


(See "Great Galactic Wars" sourcebook for additional information)

SARLICON REPTILIAN

The Sarlicons are believed to be the descendants of the ancient Zarlacacs who plagued humanity's corner of the galaxy during the early centuries of interstellar travel. They are a saurian species, but have adapted and mutated over the millenia to take on some human characteristics (perhaps through intentional genetic modification). The Sarlicons have long held an extreme hatred towards humans, but nobody is certain why. Roughly 25 years before the coming of the Gladitorial Axis, the Sarlicons invaded the Commonwealth, leading to a three-year war that decimated both sides. Only the timely intervention by the Colonial Union led to the defeat of the Sarlicons, who have since become something of a protectorate of the Union. However, the past few years have seen a growing resentment towards political affiliation with the Union (which counts many human worlds as members) and a civil war has been brewing amongst this reptilian race.

Sarlicons are an amalgamation of several saurian races from thousands of years before the current era. There are distinct differences between Sarlicon sub-races, ranging from the large slow-moving Norog Rex which once dominated the reptilian sphere to the smaller, quicker Vektors who currently hold leadership. Therefore, individual Sarlicons will usually be one or the other: either large and strong or small (human-sized) and quick. Both sub-races, however, can still spit acid and possess sharp, devastating claws while also being considered low intellect in general.



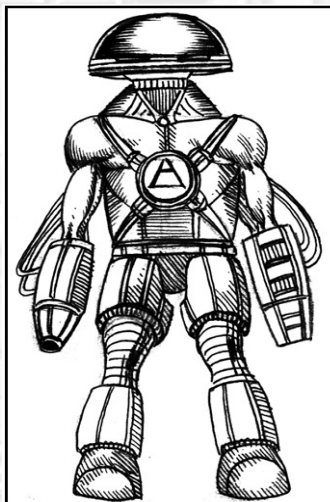
Use Reptilian template in Chapter Four as a starting point for creating a Sarlicon PC.

SIMULCRON (ARTIFICIAL PERSONALITY)

One of the strangest types of beings encountered in the ASTRAL EMPIRES universe is the Simulcron. These are artificially-created intelligences based on famous personalities of the past. And while they believe themselves to be the original being they are based on, they appear to be little more than A.I. matrices patterned after long-dead persons of note from galactic history. Why this was done originally has long been forgotten, although it is possible that they were created as a weapon thousands of years in the past and somehow have survived into the AD 10,000 era. Simulcrons are typically VERY intelligent from both centuries of experience wandering the galaxy and their original programming. They have high intelligence ratings, but are seen somewhat as the "strange cousins" of the spaceways, leading to low social standing.

Also, the "shell bodies" they inhabit can range from very robotic-looking physiologies to advanced cutting edge "replicant" humanoid forms. Thus, their physical forms can range anywhere from quite low to extremely high on the strength and agility scales.

(NOTE: Unlike most species templates, Simulcrons are very much affected by the "bodies" they are given during construction which may be low tech or quite advanced.)



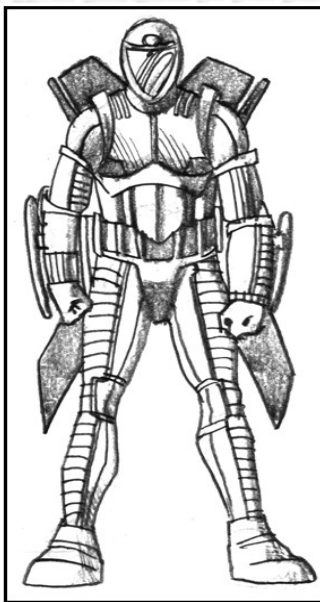
VOID-RANGER

Members of an exclusive and secretive order, the Void-Rangers are the descendant organization of the ancient Solar Rangers who once kept the home system of humanity safe. Over many thousands of years, Void-Rangers have gained in power and status to the point that they now exclusively handle the admission of newly discovered sapient races into galactic civilization. Void-Rangers report to the Galactic Assembly, a supra-galactic congress made up of the ancient races who are all "sitting out" the war between the Unified Fleetworlds and the Gladitorial Axis.

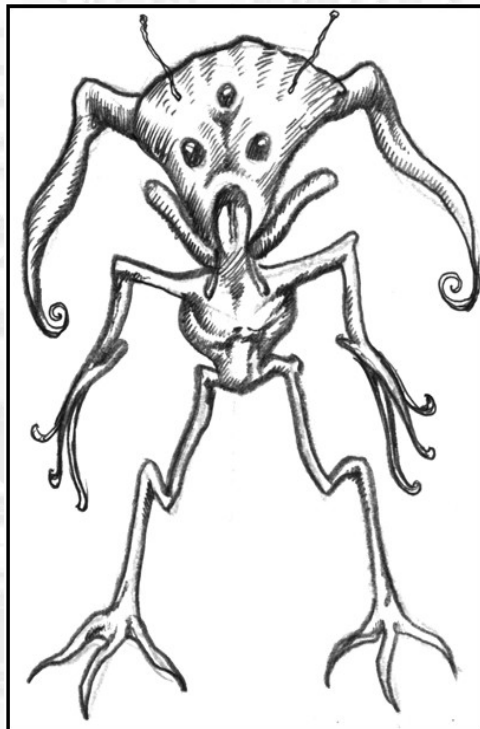
A Void-Ranger is *the* power in any system he, she, or it may explore. They live and work in solitary circumstances aboard their vessels, typically accompanied by one or two sentient robot assistants. It is up to a Void-Ranger to determine if any world is going to be welcomed on the galactic scene or if they will be annihilated before reaching spaceflight status.

For that reason, Void-Rangers are carefully selected for traits of intelligence, compassion, and historical knowledge, as their vessels carry the capability of destroying any planet they visit. Their technology is a level or two above that of the Axis or Fleetworlds and they maintain an aloof distance between themselves and other galactic citizens. Convincing them to take sides in the galactic conflict that is brewing is a *major* objective of both the Axis and the Fleetworlds.

(NOTE: Void-Rangers are EXTREMELY powerful in terms of the forces available to them vis-a-vis their starships. They should be restricted to non-PCs in most campaigns, but offer an interesting contrast to other races.)



NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS



XENOROACH RIPPERS

Although most of these horrifying creatures were killed off in the first millennium of man's sojourn amongst the stars, there remain occasional opportunities for encounters. Besides the various xenoforms created by the ancient Precursor races as weapons there are numerous other dangerous beasts in humanity's region of the Mosaic Galaxy of a similar nature. The Xenoroachs were once the bane of human existence, but have been mostly wiped out. The last scattered colonies of Rippers are just waiting for the right ship to come along...

(NOTE: Xenoroach Rippers are listed in detail in the ASTRAL EMPIRES: 2200-BRAVELY VENTURE Sourcebook. They are considered feral with natural weapons and are naturally armored (armoured, if you're British).

XENOROACH RIPPER STANDARD STAT RANGES

The Xenoroach creatures can accurately be defined as biological nightmares and perhaps even killing machines. First discovered in the early 02100s multiple attempts throughout human history have been unsuccessful in completely eradicating the threat they pose. They still occasionally show up on vessels that have passed through the Great Divide, suggesting to some that they still maintain an active presence in that universe-forsaken void.

The average Ripper will possess stats in the following ranges:

Strength: 2D+2 / 5D+2

Agility: 2D+1 / 4D+2

Intelligence: 1D+2 / 3D

Perception: 2D / 4D+1

They have a Movement of 12

Damage:

Gripping Mouth Orifice: STR+2D

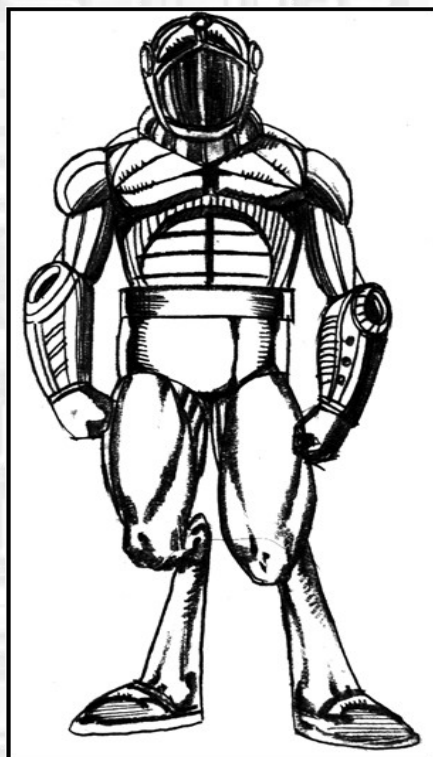
Arm/Head-mounted claws: STR+1

Story Considerations:

Natural Armor: These creatures appear to be solid rock-like substances in their transitional cocoon form, causing them to have been mistaken for extremely valuable fuel sources in the early years of space travel. However, when they "hatch" they immediately begin the process of hunting for other organic life to sate their hunger. Even in this state they retain their natural armored exterior (Armor Value +3D)

Natural climber: This creature is a physiological specimen on several levels including having the trait of being an excellent climber of both natural and artificial surfaces. (Climb +2D).

Xenophobic: These creatures will have a predisposition to hatred of other species. This lasts in all their early stage metamorphoses until they reach adulthood.



QAJARI WRITH

An elusive race, the insectoid Qajari Brix fashioned these strange robot creatures based on a combination of their insect form and human physiology, to allow for greater commonality on the battlefield with their allies. Since the Qajari Brix were peaceful they refused to participate in warfare during their era, delegating combat to their robotic Writh creations. These strange machines have tended to remain undiscovered over the millenia and fatally operational on the former battlefields of Qajari and human space. It is even rumored that they have a fleet of starships somewhere in the outworlds of settled space...

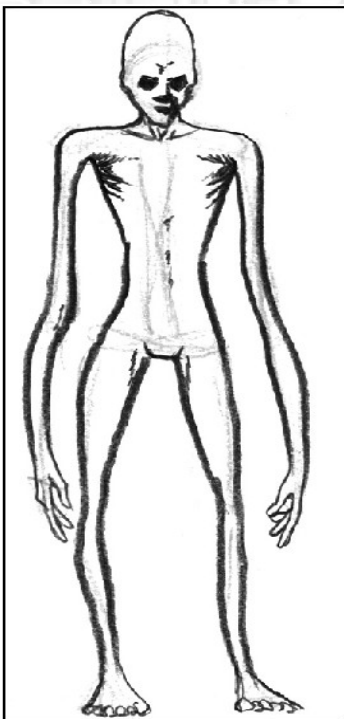
(NOTE: The Qajari Writh have physical characteristics similar to robots of other species. However, their hive mind behavior is vastly different from other synthetic lifeforms. There are those who wonder if the Qajari Brith really went extinct... Or just... changed?)



BETA PEGASI

The Beta Pegasi are a bizarre race of non-humanoid aliens that have been almost entirely restricted to their region of space. With a vague appearance of a winged elephant, these creatures are strange-looking but exceptionally powerful beings. They appear to be mostly benevolent, however, and have actually established quite friendly relations with the Colonial Union. Their starships are advanced technologically, carrying fusion and plasmoid weaponry unseen since before the Galactic Federacy even came into existence.

(NOTE: The Beta Pegasi have advanced intelligence characteristics, but meager physical skills although they do possess glider membranes. They're also powerful psionics users, although metaphysics are not covered in this book and are instead located in the Galaxy Master's Guide.)



MAAVUS CLUSTER ALLIANCE

The Maavus Cluster Alliance seems to be a race of interstellar merchants, primarily in the business of selling advanced technologies scavenged from former Galactic Federacy worlds. They use large Trader vessels to seek out, make contact, and arrange deals with potential purchasers of their products. Although they are in possession of much information and technology from the Galactic Federacy, the Maavans come across as fairly benign and friendly, unless they feel taken advantage of or threatened.

(NOTE: Maavans will virtually never be encountered outside of their ships, so their physical attributes are fairly unimportant and are not listed here. However, it appears that the Axis has done something to gain their distrust making the Maavus Cluster Alliance a potential ally for the Unified Fleet in the coming war.)



RAVAGERS

Ravagers are brutal savages driven into primal behaviors by certain parasitic organisms found on various worlds at the edge of settled space. It appears that Ravagers are humans who are slowly consumed by these organisms and so begin to take on a completely different form. They retain enough sentience to operate machinery and weaponry, but quickly lose the ability to communicate with their fellow beings.

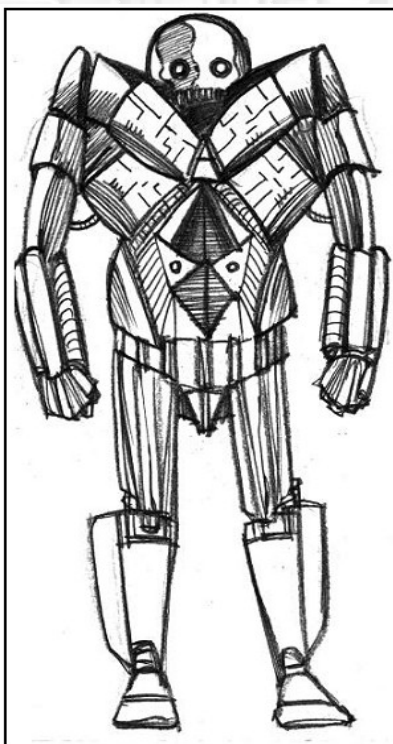
(NOTE: Ravagers have enhanced physical traits as part of the "ravaging process", but low abilities in knowledge as they turn into mindless beasts.)



ATARAN ARCHIVISTS

A major ally of the Commonwealth over the past two centuries, the Atarans are a subtle and quite mysterious species that may be descended from one of the ancient Precursor races. There is evidence that they were sent to this part of the galaxy a couple of centuries ago to chronicle the coming struggle against the Axis, almost as though they knew in advance what was coming. They remain an enigma shrouded in mystery, but appear to be jovial and well-intentioned.

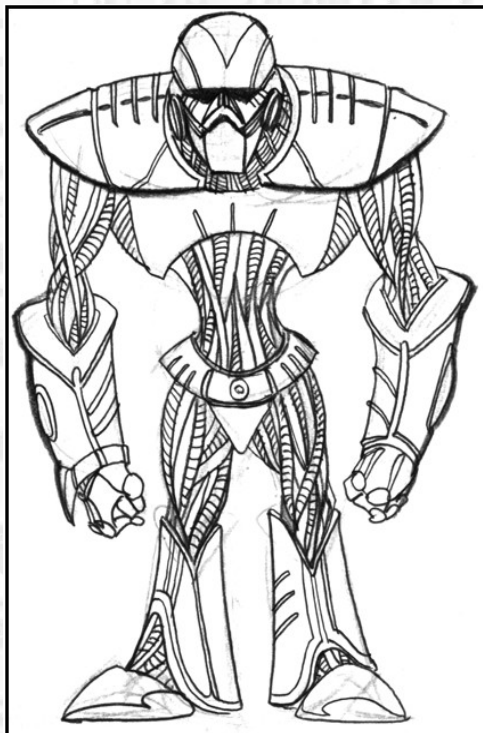
(NOTE: The Atarans have psionic capabilities and are incapable of direct violence. There are some similarities to the ancient Qajari Brix, but pacifistic races are occasionally encountered in various regions of the galaxy, so no one has explored possible relationships between the two at any length).



NEMESIS SYNDICATE

A vast association of criminal organizations, the Nemesis Syndicate dates back to before the fall of the Galactic Federacy. During that time it held a large amount of influence, extending its corruption deep into the various governments that constituted that ancient pan-galactic alliance. For the past few millennia it has maintained a low profile among the Imperium and is now beginning to stretch its tendrils out into the Fleetworlds. Agents of the Nemesis Syndicate are becoming more active throughout settled space, and the Unified Fleet, along with various member worlds, is initiating procedures to deal with potential disruptions of the war effort by this newly resurgent force.

(NOTE: Members of almost any race [bizarre aliens like the Qajari Writh, Maavans, Beta Pegasi, etc. being the exceptions] can be agents for the Nemesis Syndicate. Also, it is believed that the return of the Nemesis Syndicate to the galactic scene is somehow related to the coming of the Crimson WarLord and that they have working in secret for millennia on the plan that is now unfolding.)



OMNICRON GUARDIANS

The Omnicron are one of the great mysteries of the galaxy. For a thousand years they were the guardians of the Galactic Federacy, and eventually even displaced the biological intelligences who originally built them. However, on the very eve of battle with an ancient race called the OverLords, the Omnicron disappeared with their enemy and neither were ever seen again.

Until recently...

Now, in the deep depths of space the massive Omnicron ships are beginning to show up again...

And they're looking for something...

Or someone...

(NOTE: The Omnicron are robotic intelligences that can build machine forms for themselves of various sizes. Some evidence suggests that the Omnicrons are the ships themselves with the smaller robots serving as something akin to individual cells in a biological lifeform.

Regardless, when encountered the Omnicron are extremely powerful robotic lifeforms with maximum physical statistics for their size and mass. Rules for building robots are optimal for constructing an Omnicron character, although "biological" Omnicrons may exist as well.)

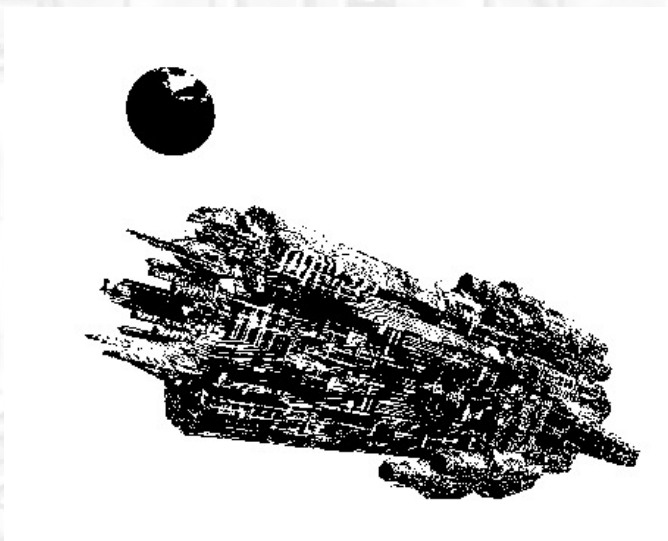
OMNICRON DESOLATORS *(Unknown to the general population)*

At the time of their conflict with the OverLords millenia ago, the Omnicron found themselves at the mercy of their own interpretations of logic. Were they to exterminate an entire race of beings, (as they were about to do with the OverLords), or try to find an alternative solution? At that time of uncertainty, some of the OverLords in their "ethereal" forms were able to infect the Omnicron ships and transfer their intelligences as data into the great machines. At that time the Omnicron prime intelligence realized what was happening and jumped the entire fleet into deep X-space. Over time the Omnicron separated into two groups:

- *The Guardians of Life, who follow the Three Laws of Artificial Sentience and seek to protect sapient life in the universe

and

- *The "Bringers of Desolation"... those who are controlled by the OverLords' presence and now advocate the total destruction of all non-synthetic life in the universe based on a warped interpretation of the Three Laws.



Omnicron ships became a common sight once again during the 10,000 AD era after three millennia of absence.

ADDITIONAL CHARACTER TEMPLATES

Con Artist

Character Name:
Occupation: Con Artist
Species: Human
Gender:
Physical Description:

Description: Life is an opportunity to be exploited to its fullest. You like to think of yourself as wandering the universe, revealing the wonders of the ages to the uniformed, hoping to move happiness from one corner of the galaxy to another.

Agility 3D+1
Brawling _____
Dodge _____
Running _____
Sleight of Hand _____

Strength 2D

Knowledge 2D+2
Aliens _____
Astrography _____
Bureaucracy _____
Business _____
Cultures _____
Languages _____
Scholar _____
Streetwise _____
Survival _____
Willpower _____

Metaphysics 1D
Channel _____
Sense _____
Transform _____

Mechanical 3D
Navigation _____
Vehicle Operation _____

Perception 3D+2
Bargain _____
Con _____
Forgery _____
Gambling _____
Hide _____
Investigation _____

Persuasion _____
Sneak _____

Technical 2D
Comp. Interface/Repair _____
Medicine _____
Personal Equip. Repair _____
Security _____

Advantages: Equipment (R1), con game props add 2 to any con attempts when using them

Disadvantages: Quirk (R1), you tend to forget your cons are cons and sometimes get caught in your own lies

Special Abilities: None

Equipment: Various decks of cards and manipulatable games of chances; Plastovar armor decorated to look like a flashy outfit (Armor Value +1D+1); personal blaster (damage 3D; range 4/8/12; ammo 6) with 1 spare energy cell (ammo 6); hidden holster; 1,000 credits in various types and denominations (not usable on all worlds); props for con games

Fate Points 1
Character Points 5
Funds 3D
Credits 525
Strength Damage 1D
Move 10
Body Points 25

Body Points **Range**
 Stunned 15-20
 Wounded 10-14
 Severely Wounded 5-9
 Incapacitated 2-4
 Mortally Wounded 1
 Dead 0

Cyberchopper

Character Name:

Occupation: Cyberchopper

Species: Human

Gender:

Physical Description:

Agility 3D+2
Brawling _____
Dodge _____
Firearms _____
Melee Combat _____

Strength 3D
Lift _____
Stamina _____

Knowledge 2D+2
Aliens _____
Business _____
Intimidation _____
Languages _____
Scholar _____
Streetwise _____
Willpower _____

Metaphysics 0D

Mechanical 3D+1
Comm _____
Sensors _____
Shields _____
Vehicle Operation _____

Perception 2D+1
Bargain _____
Con _____
Hide _____
Investigation _____
Persuasion _____
Search _____
Sneak _____

Technical 3D

Description: You used to zipyank other steelskins and taking the goods back to the chopshop. Then the cutter got slagged, and they were gonna close you down. But you got new skills fast and now you're the cutter.

Armor Repair _____
Comp. Interface/Repair _____
Firearms Repair _____
Flight Systems Repair _____
Medicine _____
Personal Equip. Repair _____
Robot Interface/Repair _____
Security _____

Advantages: None

Disadvantages: Debt (R2), you need to pay protection to keep yourself out of prison; Enemy (R2), you're a known cyberjacker and thief, suspected of worse crimes, and wanted by most police

Special Abilities: See cybernetics equipment

Equipment: SuperSight (Enhanced Sense: Sight (R1), +1 to sight-based rolls); cyberarm (Increased Attribute (R2), +2 to Strength with Limitation Ability Loss (R1), right arm only); blaster pistol (damage 5D; range 20/50/150; ammo 12) with 2 spare energy cells (ammo 12 each); med-kit with cybertools (+1D to medicine rolls and allows performance of Cybernetics surgery; includes spare supplies); cred-key

Fate Points 1
Character Points 5
Funds 3D
Credits 525
Strength Damage 1D
Move 10
Body Points 31

Body Points **Range**
 Stunned 18-24
 Wounded 12-17
 Severely Wounded 6-11
 Incapacitated 3-5
 Mortally Wounded 1-2
 Dead 0

Megacorp Contract Negotiator

Character Name:

Occupation: Megacorp Contract Negotiator

Species: Human

Gender:

Physical Description:

Agility 3D+2

Brawling _____

Dodge _____

Firearms _____

Flying / 0-G _____

Melee Combat _____

Running _____

Throwing _____

Strength 2D

Climb / Jump _____

Lift _____

Stamina _____

Swim _____

Knowledge 3D+1

Aliens _____

Bureaucracy _____

Business _____

Cultures _____

Intimidation _____

Languages _____

Scholar _____

Security Regulations _____

Survival _____

Willpower _____

Metaphysics 0D

Mechanical 3D

Comm _____

Exoskeleton Operation _____

Gunnery _____

Navigation _____

Piloting _____

Sensors _____

Shields _____

Vehicle Operation _____

Perception 3D

Bargain _____

Con _____

Forgery _____

Hide _____

Investigation _____

Persuasion _____

Search _____

Sneak _____

Description: Working for a multi-planetary organization, your life is fast paced, complicated, and, aside from the steady pay, unpredictable. One day your negotiating a contract; the next you're quelling a dispute.

Technical 3D

Armor Repair _____

Comp. Interface/Repair _____

Demolitions _____

Exoskeleton Repair _____

Firearms Repair _____

Flight Systems Repair _____

Gunnery Repair _____

Medicine _____

Personal Equip. Repair _____

Security _____

Vehicle Repair _____

Advantages: Cultures (R4), you've got extensive knowledge about many cultures, enough to help you fit in and make first contact go smoother; Patron (R4), your employer keeps you well informed and supplied

Disadvantages: Advantage Flaw (R1), your employer often lies to get you to take a job; Employed (R3), your employer dictates your assignments; Infamy (R2), you are well known and rarely well liked by those in other corporations and in many local space fleets; Quirk (R2), you're a snob to people working for other corporations — unless you need them for something

Special Abilities: None

Equipment: Slick-looking Plastovar suit (Armor Value +1D+1); medium semi-automatic (damage 4D; range 8/13/35; ammo 17) plus 2 extra clips (ammo 10 each); armored briefcase (damage resistance total 21) with blank contracts; cred-key; corporate contacts might help you get other items needed for the job at hand

Fate Points 1

Character Points 5

Funds 3D

Credits 525

Strength Damage 2D

Move 10

Body Points 27

Body Points **Range**

Stunned 16–22

Wounded 10–15

Severely Wounded 5–9

Incapacitated 2–4

Mortally Wounded 1

Dead 0

Technical Wiz

Character Name:

Occupation: Technical Wiz

Species: Human

Gender:

Physical Description:

Agility 2D+2

Brawling —

Dodge —

Firearms —

Flying / 0-G —

Melee Combat —

Sleight of Hand —

Throwing —

Strength 2D

Climb / Jump —

Lift —

Knowledge 3D

Astrography —

Business —

Intimidation —

Languages —

Scholar —

Security Regulations —

Streetwise —

Metaphysics 0D

Mechanical 3D

Comm —

Gunnery —

Piloting —

Sensors —

Shields —

Vehicle Operation —

Perception 3D+1

Bargain —

Con —

Forgery —

Gambling —

Hide —

Investigation —

Persuasion —

Search —

Sneak —

Description: Quick to spot and diagnose a problem, you can fix anything. You're always looking for new jobs that can help you keep up on the latest technology or improve older versions.

Technical 4D

Armor Repair —

Comp. Interface/Repair —

Demolitions —

Exoskeleton Repair —

Firearms Repair —

Flight Systems Repair —

Gunnery Repair —

Medicine —

Personal Equip. Repair —

Robot Interface/Repair —

Security —

Vehicle Repair —

Advantages: None

Disadvantages: Age (R1), you are slightly younger than typical, so people don't always take you seriously

Special Abilities: Skill Bonus: Observant (R1), +1 to *investigation*, *search*, and *sensors* totals

Equipment: Repair and diagnostic kit (+1D to *repair* attempts; one use per skill); blaster pistol (damage 5D; range 20/50/150; ammo 12) with 1 spare energy cell (ammo 12); syntheleather jacket (Armor Value +2); cred-key

Fate Points 1

Character Points 5

Funds 1D

Credits 525

Strength Damage 2D

Move 10

Body Points 25

Body Points **Range**

Stunned 15–20

Wounded 10–14

Severely Wounded 5–9

Incapacitated 2–4

Mortally Wounded 1

Dead 0

The Eras of ASTRAL EMPIRES

Rest enough for the individual man, too much and too soon, and we call it death. But for man, no rest and no ending. He must go on, conquest beyond conquest. First this little planet and all its winds and ways, and then all the laws of mind and matter that restrain him. Then the planets about him, and, at last, out across immensities to the stars. And when he has conquered all the deep space, and all the mysteries of time, still he will be beginning.

Herbert George Wells
Prophet of Firstearth
Things to Come, 01936

The ASTRAL EMPIRES universe is a thriving universe built upon many of the common themes of the science fiction genre. To bring the various settings to life, we have created numerous pieces of fiction, along with sourcebooks detailing each time period and region of the Mosaic Galaxy, .

Each of the first ten Century Sourcebooks describes a single century of humanity's transition to the stars, giving depth and insight into each particular time period. Following those works are the Millennial Sourcebooks, each covering a one-thousand year span of human and alien history from AD 3000 to AD 10,000. At that point the Trans-Millennial Sourcebooks take over and the period explored in each additional resource becomes 10,000 years or greater.

Trans-Century Sourcebooks

ASTRAL EMPIRES: AD 2100-Solar Ecliptic

Humanity takes its first cautious steps into the heavens, with super-nations such as Pax Europa, the Panasian Sphere, Yamato Corporate, Crown States, Free Aries Colonies, New Masada, Medina League, the African Federation, along with the oversight of the Solar Navy and UECON directing the colonization of the Solar System.

ASTRAL EMPIRES: AD 2200-Bravely Venture

Terran Man ventures beyond his home system for the first time as the various competing powers of the so-called United Earth Commonwealth of Nations take to the stars. The rivalry between the Solar Navy and UECON dominates the first half of the century, while the various cold wars with the Kronans, T'Garans, Kentaurans

ASTRAL EMPIRES-THE RPG-OPEN D6 EDITION

and other nearby xeno races creates conflict in the second half of the 2200s. In addition, the first Diplomatic and Medical Stations are established, and the discoveries of the mysterious Cosmic Oracles create a sense of wonder among the stars.

ASTRAL EMPIRES: AD 2300-Bold Frontier

The Human race expands out onto the galactic scene, embracing the role of a new fledgling interstellar power despite various Terran factions still vying for dominance behind the scenes. The political powers of the various stellar arms that constitute the Interstellar Federacy cooperate, scheme, and jostle for supremacy, while the powerful Vanguard Fleet maintains a lonely vigil.

ASTRAL EMPIRES: AD 2400-Terran Civil War

Mankind's rise to prominence brings with it a terrifying reality: Humanity is not yet ready to leave behind its basest impulses which have defined it for millennia. This ultimately leads to tragic inter-species warfare ensuing, defining an era of confusion and conflict even amidst great technological innovation.

ASTRAL EMPIRES: AD 2500-Lost Colonies

Following the brutal Terran Civil War and the destruction of several crucial transport HyperGates, many human worlds find themselves cut off from Earth as the newly reunified Terran Alliance struggles to reclaim its holdings. Throughout the planets of mankind the efforts to rebuild the civilization dominate the concerns of the populace, bringing with them opportunities for adventure and exploration unseen since the first forays into space four centuries prior.

ASTRAL EMPIRES: AD 2600-Lightspeed

The slow rebuilding of Terran culture begins, with a stronger unified humanity facing the onslaught of successful waves of powerfully different but strangely familiar alien races. Caught up in the conflict between two rival Felinoid races (the civilized T'Garans and the barbaric L'Narans) the human race and her fledgling xeno allies face a crisis that could throw them back to the dark age they just emerged from. In the far depths of space away from their brothers, the various spinoff civilizations of Terran Humanity begin their own march towards galactic supremacy.

ASTRAL EMPIRES: AD 2700-Restoration

Following the defeat of the last of the Felinoid races, a resurgent Terran Empire finds itself as the preeminent power in their corner of the galaxy. An unequaled time of

ASTRAL EMPIRES-THE RPG-OPEN D6 EDITION

exploration and technological development is inaugurated by a giant leap in the post-humanist history of mankind, but one fraught with all the challenges and opportunities inherent in a civilization in flux.

ASTRAL EMPIRES: AD 2800-Golden Century

The first Golden Age of starfaring humanity unfolds with mankind spreading throughout the local galactic arms. With peace reigning throughout mankind's corner of the galaxy, there is more time to explore all the wonders left behind by the ancient Precursors, including the phenomenal Cosmic Oracles.

ASTRAL EMPIRES: AD 2900-Divide and Fall

The brief era of Terran/Solaran domination of interstellar space begins to unwind as various alien races begin to envy the successes of humanity and to take advantage of the pacifism spreading throughout the Terran Empires' various worlds. Only the Alpha Marines of the Solar Legion are allowed the implements of violence in partnership with their automated CyberTank counterparts, struggling in vain with their limited numbers to hold back the wolves at the door.

Trans-Millennial Sourcebooks

ASTRAL EMPIRES: AD 3000-Diaspora

Following the devastation of Terra, humanity plays a hide and seek game amongst the stars fleeing from terrifying aliens, remorseless machines and rogue elements of mankind itself. Only the mighty Knights of the Iridium Table hold back the complete annihilation of mankind as the eight Astral Arks and numerous survivor-laden planetoids seek out new worlds in other regions of the galaxy to escape the onslaught.

ASTRAL EMPIRES: AD 4000-Sailing the Stars

After several hundred years of exile the reestablishment of a human homeworld leads to the creation of a new and stronger NewTerran Alliance. Within the borders of the Dysonian System, three major strands of humanity have developed. The Royalists believe themselves to be the rightful rulers of humanity, due to their efforts in defeating those who almost destroyed humanity. The Isolationists believe that humanity should remain within the confines of the Dyson Sphere forever, eschewing any contact with the outside worlds. And the Merchant Fleet just want to make a profit trading with the outsider planets. Swashbuckling adventure in the Aetheric Realm follows, with kinetic cannon and plasma bursters crisscrossing the deep dark

of night.

ASTRAL EMPIRES: AD 5000-Rise of the Technocracy

As humanity's strength grows and its technological prowess increases a new and vastly more powerful Galactic Federacy becomes a way of life throughout the Milky Way and the Magellanic Clouds.

ASTRAL EMPIRES: AD 6000-Machine Domination

Following a time of great progress, the Galactic Federacy is undone by the very machines created to insure stability, prosperity and protection from the horrors of the universe. It is the era of the Machine Domination...

ASTRAL EMPIRES: AD 7000-The Long Interregnum

The Long Night begins, with humanity far from home and the various alien races thus far encountered trying to survive out in the great deep.

ASTRAL EMPIRES: AD 8000-Merchants of Menace

Slowly the galactic civilization begins to rebuild, with the Trade Wars between numerous star kingdoms and alien cultures defining a time of development and warfare.

ASTRAL EMPIRES: AD 9000-Galactic Renaissance

Remnants of various races and civilizations begin to form alliances, expand trade efforts, and generally reconstitute the cultures that will one day build the Galactic Endurium.

The Great Beyond Sourcebooks

ASTRAL EMPIRES: AD 10,000-Great Galactic Wars

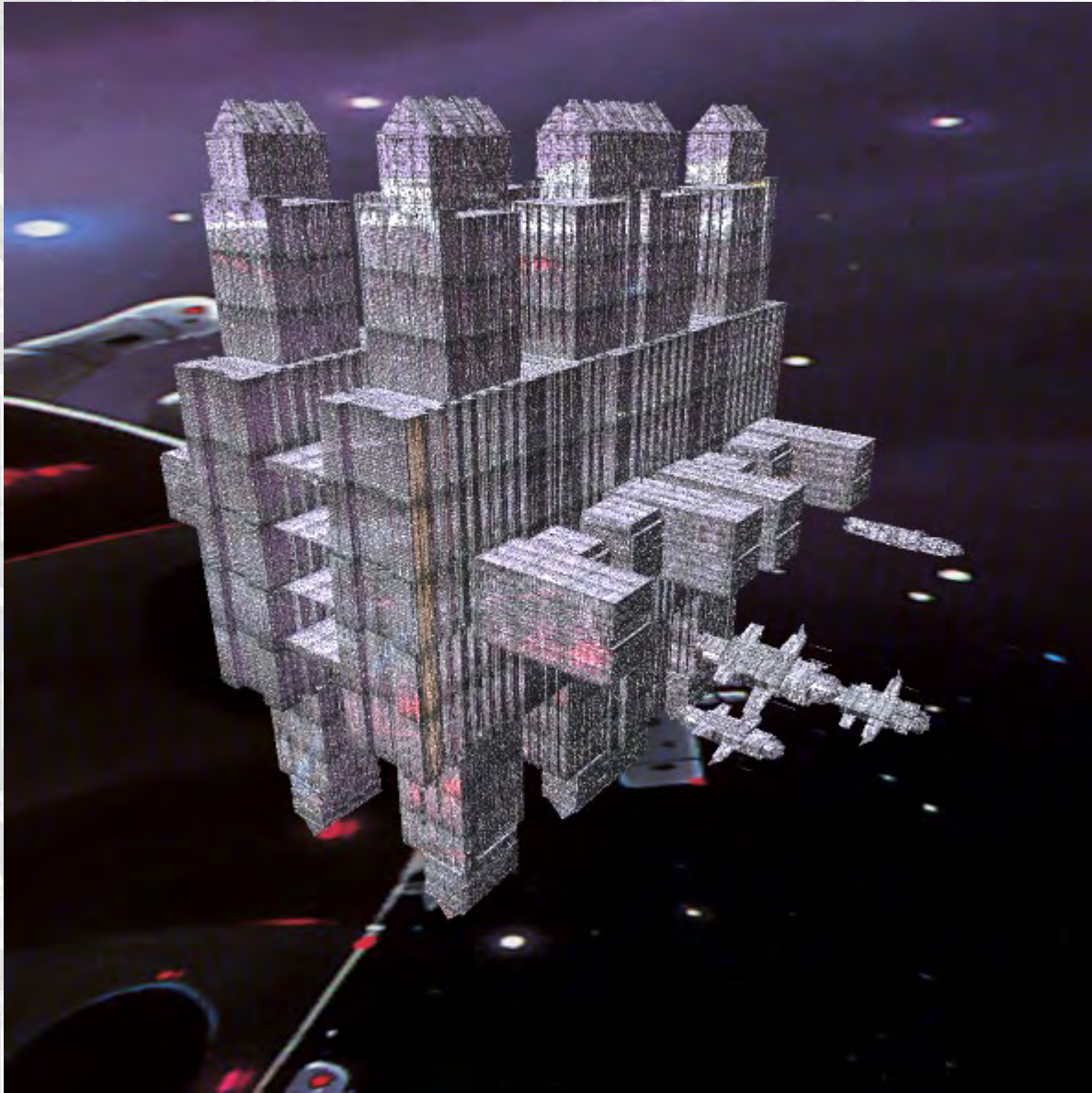
A time of epic battles and monumental discoveries as the crucible of conflict creates a new galactic order. *(This is the era of the book you are currently reading)*

ASTRAL EMPIRES: AD 20,000-Rise of the Endurium

With little resemblance to Solarian humanity, the great Endurium spreads its tentacles throughout the galaxy, wiping out entire alien civilizations in a drive towards a single-species unified galactic culture.

ASTRAL EMPIRES: AD 50,000-Cosmic Age

The Cosmic Age commences, with marvels beyond the understanding of all who have gone before. A true time of galactic wonder... And turmoil...

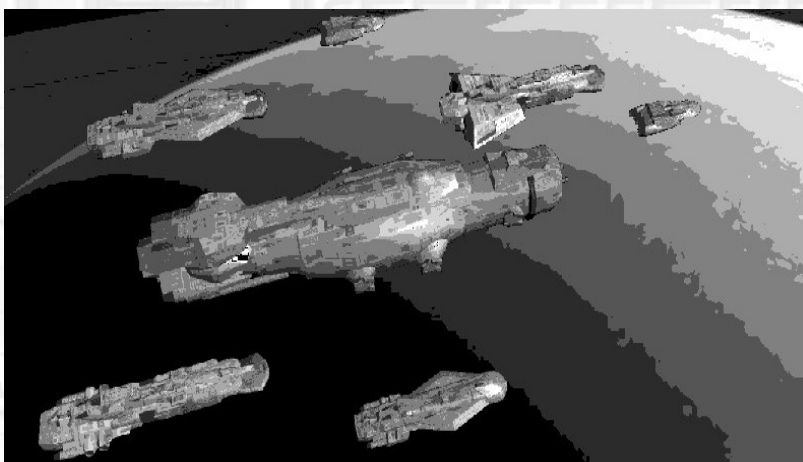


The Celestial Stations of the 50,000 AD era were true technological marvels to behold and would have appeared as almost magical to those living in previous eras of galactic history.

The Mysteries of the Precursor Races

In addition to the various xeno populations encountered throughout deep space, there are six known Precursor races (ie. The Ancients that once populated deep space, but who appear to have been rendered extinct with a few possible exceptions):

1. Engineers-Builders of the Hypergates, who once inhabited the entire galaxy?
2. Architects-Constructed the Dysonian Globes found occasionally throughout space (including New Masada, Humanity's enclave during the Promethean Rampage).
3. Archivists-Pacifistic observers of galactic history obsessed with recording Humanity's rise to power in the Galaxy (It is believed that the Atarans of 10,000 AD are their living descendents). Many believe they also constructed the Cosmic Oracles found on certain worlds.
4. Destroyers (aka "Laythians")-Massive space-going living ships, the Laythians are the locusts of deep space. It is impossible to comprehend their means of communication or their motives.
5. Preservers-Encountered early on in mankind's sojourn amongst the stars. The Zetans and Promedians are both believed to be survivors of this ancient race.
6. Cartographers-Mapped the jump-lanes and wormhole nexus network. Some believe that the traders of the Maavan Cluster Alliance are descendents of this race.



A Brief History of the Mosaic Galaxy

1. The Galactic Federacy (04500-06500 AD)

The era of the Galactic Federacy (sometimes called the *First Empire*) has often been considered a true Golden Age of the Galaxy. With the Diaspora having concluded and the Second Great Expansion fully underway, the Federacy had all the wealth and power any political entity could hope for. Thousands of planets interconnected in commerce and trade created new sources of income for hundreds of previously isolated worlds. The colony ships of the Andari Empire (a major part of the Federacy) reached out to previously unexplored regions of the Orion arm, encountering several new species of sentient life forms and developing extensive economic alliances. There were hostile races to be encountered as well, and several wars were fought during this time against the fearsome J'Garan Concordium, the militant Zakaji Empire, and the Oreonus Stellar Republic.

To fight for the Federacy in these struggles, its leaders created the Xenolegion superwarriors, drawn from the best soldiers of each of the member races. They quickly became legendary for their abilities and soon were known throughout the galaxy as they proceeded to win virtually every war they fought in. With the protection of the Xenolegions the Galactic Federacy continued to grow even stronger. From the conflicts they engaged in came new allies, as the defeated foes often chose to join the Galactic Federacy in order to avoid extinction or at best the marginalization of their species on the galactic stage. A new and stronger alliance emerged from these trying times. These were to be the most prosperous centuries for many of the races in the galaxy.

Then came the *Millennia of the Machines*, as it is now known; the era of the hated Machine Empire of the Omnicrons.

2. Rise of the Omnicron (06500-07000 AD)

The second major galactic civilization was one of despotism and control. The Omnicron rule was marked by the destruction of numerous civilizations as the Second Empire sought to subjugate and control the populace by fear. The Omnicrons were a created race, designed to serve as impartial protectors for the various worlds that constituted the Galactic Federacy late in the existence of that august civilization. They were artificial brains placed in massive machine bodies and given the authority to command the Xenolegions in peacekeeping and

military campaigns due to their perceived objectivity. As their numbers grew, they became detached from their respective races and evolved into a distinct race themselves. They soon forgot their duty to protect the Settled Worlds and began to desire to control them instead. They grew in power and influence until finally overthrowing the Federacy by sheer numbers at the Battle of Pentaris. It was at that engagement that they proceeded to kill the leaders of the Federacy and declare themselves to be rulers of a new empire. As they seized power they proceeded to make all other races subservient to themselves, as their leaders stood in the very ashes of the Andari Throneworld of Pentaris. In the centuries that followed, the ships of the Omnicron Pacification Fleet bombarded many worlds into rubble as part of their program of control. Few races took kindly to this treatment, but the Omnicron Empire was still far too powerful to contest. As the first attempts were made to rebel against the Omnicrons, the scattered resistance accomplished little. However, the point finally came when several races finally united to face the Omnicrons. Together the J'Garan, D'Arridians, Zakaji, and the various offshoots of humanity that would one day form the Commonwealth overthrew the Omnicron Empire, tracking down and killing every last member of that evil race.

Or so they believed...

The years of the First Interregnum were to follow.

3. The First Interregnum (07000 to 08000 AD)

This era marked the time of the Astral Kingdoms, small associations founded by a number of merchant princes who attempted to set up small interstellar fiefdoms in the wake of the passing of the second great empire. Some of these kingdoms would later form the foundation of the Guilds, with various syndicates becoming the Mercenary Guild, the Corporate Guild, and the Slaving Guild, amongst others. Other kingdoms would eventually join together to form the Commonwealth at the beginning of the next Galactic Era, just as they saw the Third Empire beginning to take shape.

4. The Imperial Axis, the Third Galactic Empire

Out of the First Interregnum emerged the most powerful of the Star Kingdoms to lay claim to the vacant Galactic throne. Born in adversity, the Imperium of Humanity would grow in power quickly as many of the other Astral Kingdoms joined together because of economic factors and became the Major and Minor

houses of the new empire. Within a single century, the Imperium had eclipsed the size of the former empires and began to consolidate its forces into a powerful military machine. The Imperium of Humanity would later grow even larger by signing treaties with a number of races from the Galactic Core, eventually forming the huge Imperial Axis. A number of these ancient races would migrate from the core, settling on worlds throughout the Imperium and displacing many of those worlds' indigenous inhabitants. This was done against the wishes of the Emperor, and would later lead to his overthrow during the Imperium's deadly Civil War.

The natives displaced from the Imperium's worlds would, over a period of years, move to settle on several uninhabited worlds located on the periphery of Imperium space and created the Colonial League. The League soon befriended a rising new federation known as the Primean Commonwealth, although the new arrivals were careful not to share their knowledge of the existence of the Imperium just yet, for fear of drawing attention from their fearful nemesis. Whispers were heard through the Settled Worlds of a massive civilization on the far side of the Great Void, but were usually dismissed as merely rumors. Upon expanding their respective territories into the unexplored regions further out on the spiral arm, the Colonial League and the Commonwealth ran into a previously unknown group of planets called the Frontier Union. The worlds of the Union had been settled a millennia before by survivors from the Andari-Omicron wars, and represented survivors of many of the worlds of the First Empire. Some even claimed to be descended from the peoples of Old Terra. The Commonwealth convinced the Frontier Union to join their association, but quickly grew to dominate the relationship. Over time, a movement began to restore the independence and freedom of the Union, and the Frontier Insurrection took place. The Union would win the short, but violent, conflict and regain its role in the Settled Worlds.

A time of relative peace, termed by many the "Pax Commonwealth", followed, with little more than economic confrontations taking place. However, the time came when some of the Colonial League powers began to take umbrage over the heavy hand of the Commonwealth, and a series of Trade Wars followed. It was during this time that several of the Commonwealth's members resigned and declared themselves independent, following the example set by the Frontier Union. After brutally destroying the orbital skyhook over the world of Gragonia and causing the deaths of many millions of that planet's inhabitants, the Commonwealth realized they couldn't continue to dominate the Settled Worlds as

they had previously done. With some remorse, they began to allow planets the choice to become independent sovereign powers, as long as they retained their economic ties to the Commonwealth that is.

With the Commonwealth headed down a new path of allowing worlds more freedom, a movement began to build for a looser alliance for military protection. Various races began to openly consider the possibility of other Galactic powers beyond the Settled Worlds wanting to invade and take over their burgeoning economies. A council was held on the Commonwealth homeworld of Primea, and representatives from throughout the Settled Worlds sent delegates. After several years of minimal success, a sweeping agreement on military cooperation was declared and many of the races became official supporters of the Unified Fleet. The two largest powers, the Commonwealth and the Colonial League, would dominate the new organization, but most of the races were satisfied that they had built a force of protection for the Settled Worlds in case of any possible incursion down the road. It would not be long before this new cooperation would prove important.

The Unified Fleet's first test as a military alliance came after ships from a previously unencountered race began attacking Commonwealth shipping. This new enemy was composed of a consortium of a reptiloid species known collectively as the Sarlicons. An opportunistic nomadic race that had also moved from the Galactic Core, the Sarlicons had assumed control over a handful of conquered worlds located in a region of the Great Void unclaimed by either the Imperium or Commonwealth. It quickly became obvious that they were actively seeking to expand into a major Galactic power and were looking at taking on the Commonwealth in order to raise their status. The Commonwealth was soon forced to declare war as the attacks on their shipping continued, but found itself in a strategic disadvantage due to the unexpectedly large size of the Sarlicon fleet. An appeal for help was made to the other signatories of the Unified Fleet association, including to the Colonial League and the Frontier Union whose previous military cooperation only included hostilities initiated by external Galactic powers.

After much deliberation the League and the Union joined the fight and within one year, the Sarlicons had been forced back to their home world of Tantroxx. However, it was during that time that the first hard evidence of the existence of the Imperium came to light. Investigations showed that some agents of the

Imperium were supporting the Sarlicons, apparently for purposes of undermining the Commonwealth in advance of an eventual invasion. After the timely deployment of the Colonial League's powerful strategic weapons, the Sarlicon Confederacy signed an armistice and agreed to dispose of or sell off nearly all of the remaining vessels in their starfleet. Thus ended the first test of the new Unified Fleet, and with the exception of the battered Commonwealth, most of the Settled Worlds emerged more powerful than before the war had begun. However, now there was solid proof that there indeed was another Galactic power beyond the Void, with eyes on the Settled Worlds.

The expected invasion by the Imperium didn't come nearly as quickly as expected. The Imperium had isolated itself from the rest of the galaxy, closing its worlds off from commerce and ambassadorial functions. Without knowing what was going on, the Unified Fleet was forced to sit and wait. Tensions erupted between border worlds of the Commonwealth and the Colonial League, and eventually the Unified Fleet was officially dismantled. As nothing more was heard from the Imperium for over a decade a new wave of pacifism spread through the Settled Worlds. A new treaty was negotiated between the former Unified Fleet members limiting the size and power of combat starships in an effort to stave off another arms buildup. Perhaps not coincidentally, it was at this time the Imperium once again emerged following 20 years of isolation. The new organization seemed more powerful than ever as the Imperium had become the new and more powerful Gladiatorial Axis. The Emperor and the Imperial House of Lords had been displaced by a new ruling council calling themselves the Warlords, who appeared to be led by a mysterious alien encased in a massive armored suit known only as the Crimson Overlord.

The twenty years of isolation, it was soon discovered, had been due to a devastating civil war between the Houses of the Imperium fought between the Loyalists who supported the Emperor, and the newly arrived races of the Core, called the Huunta. The Huunta had defeated the Loyalist forces due to the fact, as it was quickly learned, that they possessed much of the technology of the old Omnicron Empire. Through use of the rediscovered body of knowledge they had been able to create a seemingly invincible fighting force called the Gladiators. The Axis had also spent the time in isolation to construct a fleet of massive warships, known as Arsenal Ships, which would soon become known as the Axis Armada. A new fear fell over the Settled Worlds as the very real threat of invasion was coming at a time of disunity and internal fighting. When the Albaron Astral

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Kingdom, one of the oldest members of the Commonwealth, resigned from that alliance to ally with the Axis, the cauldron began to boil. Worlds began to mobilize for war, but it appeared that it was too little, too late. Then the Axis secretly struck a deal with the Zakaji race, promising them all of the Colonial League worlds if they would join their cause and become a protectorate of the Axis. With two major Settled World powers officially on the side of the Axis, world turned against world and chaos ensued. After a millennia of relative quiet, the Galaxy would once again be plunged into total war...

With the huge Axis Armada massing on its borders, the Commonwealth began making preparations for war, not knowing when the inevitable attack would come...



Continued in the ASTRAL EMPIRES: Great Galactic Wars Sourcebook

Available from Port Nova Media

www.scifirpg.com

General Race Templates of the ASTRAL EMPIRES 10,000 AD

Most species encountered in ASTRAL EMPIRES will conform to one of the following categories:

Humanform

Descendents of the eight Astral Arks that escaped the Fall of Edena, Humanforms are found throughout the Kosmos. Over time, and because of exposure to vast amounts of radiation, many sub-forms of humanity emerged. In some cases, intentional genetic manipulation has taken place. Thus, there is an extreme range of what is considered to be "humanform". From the short, squat heavy-worlders of the Albaron Star Kingdom and the Vorwin, to the tall, thin light-gravity inhabitants of the Jaenovian Republic, the diversity of what constitutes humanity is astounding.

Offbreeds

These are the descendents of humanity that faced the greatest hazards of deep space, being corrupted by the immense radiation they encountered as they moved out among the stars. Examples include the dark, decaying Followers of the Monolith, and the various battle thralls of the Laythian Mass.

Saurianform

Although their origins are lost to the sands of time, the Saurianforms have harassed the Settled Worlds during much of Galactic History. They eventually amalgamated into a loose confederation of clans, becoming the Sarlicon Empire. Following their defeat by the combined Commonwealth-Union Unified Fleet, they became a secondary power and an adjunct to the forces of the allies.

Felineform

Another example of several related races consolidating into a single power, the J'Garans are but the most recent example of the Felineform peoples. During each of the previous Galactic Empires, one of their ancestral races served as a major power,

but the L'Narans and the T'Garans both fell (to the Andari and the Titans, respectively). Those remaining combined with the J'Garans and interbred to create the peoples of the distant Concordium.

Insectform

Early in humanity's quest for the stars (specifically, the first few hundred years), a number of Insectform races were encountered. Due to the fact that they were found on several life-bearing worlds desired by mankind, it was only natural that campaigns of extermination against them would take place. Through massive attrition over several centuries vastly reduced their numbers, a few worlds on the Fringe still deal with infestations from time to time. A minor galactic race, the Qajari Writh, are generally thought of as insectoid due to their appearance, but are really a cyborgized race with a deceptive look for strategic reasons.

Cyborgform (Cybrids)

Sub-races occur in many forms, and the Gladitorials are a good example of a half-human/half-machine peoples.

Machineform

Races such as the Omnicrons date back to the early days of humanity's conquest of the stars, but have improved and adapted at a rate far superior to their non-machine counterparts.

Enigmaform

Races such as the Beta Pegasi from beyond the frontier qualify as "Enigmaforms". Although they may have some similarities to creatures from humanity's ancient past, most are entirely new classes of life and thus remain part of the realm of the unknown.

Spacelife/StarSpawn

The massive Wartols are perhaps the best examples of spacelife, but there are other examples of living creatures that ply the depths of interstellar space, navigating the

Wormhole Conduits.

Spawnform/Voidform

Those of the deep darkness. Evil, frightening, and disturbed, they are among the greatest terrors the galaxy holds for humanity.



APPENDIX A: DIE CODE SIMPLIFICATION

As characters progress, often the number of dice players have to roll and add becomes daunting. With this in mind, this chart provides two ways of reducing the amount of dice needed.

The fast way is to roll five dice, including the Wild Die, add the results, and then add the die code's pips and a bonus number. To determine the bonus number, find the die code (ignoring the pips) of the original attribute, skill, weapon, or other value in the "Die Code" column. Then read across to the "5D" column to get the bonus number.

***Example:** A character has a Natural Ranged Weapon that does 30D of damage. Instead of rolling 30 dice, the player rolls five and adds 88 to the total on the dice.*

The faster way is to roll only the Wild Die, adding to its result the corresponding bonus listed in the "Wild Die" column of the chart.

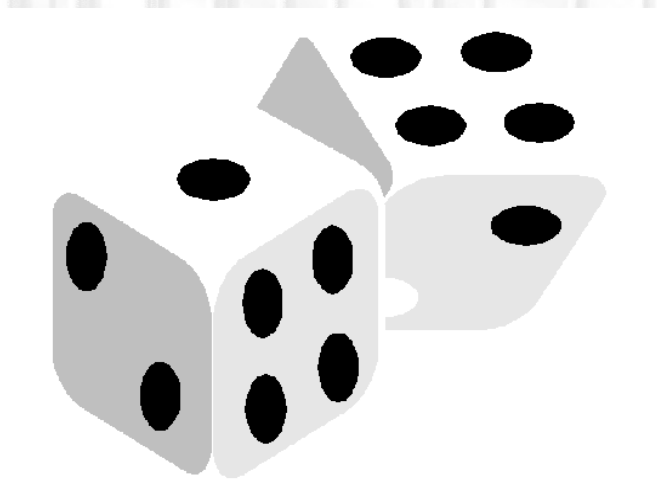
***Example:** A character has a skill with a value of 10D. The game-master rolls the Wild Die and adds 32 to the result.*

When using only the Wild Die, a Critical Failure only indicates a complication or funny thing happening; it does not affect the total rolled.

Because Character Points function similar to a Wild Die, roll any dice gained from Character Point expenditure separately. When using Fate Points on a roll, double the original die code and use that to determine the bonus number.

For bonus numbers beyond the 50D level for the "5D" column, subtract 5 from the die code and multiply the number by 3.5. Round up.

To get bonus numbers beyond the 50D level for the "Wild Die" column, subtract 1 from the die code and multiply the number by 3.5. Round up.



APPENDIX B: ASTRAL EMPIRES GLOSSARY

(Not in alphabetical order)

SUBJECT	DEFINITION
Arsenal Ship (aka "Class A" Starship)	The largest class of combat starship in the known worlds. They usually mass between 250,000 and 500,000 tons and can carry as many as twenty-four capital-scale weapons.
ISBM	"InterStellar Bombardment Drone". A strategic weapon allowing a ship or planet to attack a world from a completely different system.
Tactical MissileDrone (TMD)	The standard long-range warhead delivery system carried by warships.
AstroLaser	The primary energy weapon carried by warships. They are found in the form of cannons, banks and beam emplacements.
Standard Torpedo	A SubSpace warhead delivery system, making it very difficult to intercept.
Energy Torpedo	A HyperSpace warhead delivery system, making it a hit or miss proposition akin to a direct-fire weapon.
Fusion Cannon	Short-ranged but very powerful weapon. Somewhat obsolete, but still used by several galactic powers.
BattleShip (aka "Class B" Starship)	A large type of combat warship, traditionally the largest employed by any of the powers in the Settled Worlds. They usually mass between 120,000 and 250,000 tons and carry eight to twelve capital-scale weapons.
Great Divide	The large span of relatively empty space separating the two primary arms of the Galaxy. Also called the "Cygnian Rift".
Galactic Core	Mysterious and ancient region of the Galaxy, of which little is known.
Kron Rift	A region of dense star clusters, inhabited by numerous races. Mostly conquered by the Sarlicons in the two centuries preceding the Axis War.
Machine Axis	The mysterious galactic power that launched the campaign to conquer the Settled Worlds.
Albaron Star Kingdom	Founded during the years of the Star Kings, the Albarons are heavy-worlders with a penchant for attacking other nearby worlds. They have a specific grievance against light-worlders that go back to the ancient days of humanity, and especially against the inhabitants of the Jaenovian Republic even though both are descendants of those aboard one of the eight original Astral Arks.
Axis Triad	An unofficial name in common use created to describe the combined forces of the Axis, the Zakaji Empire and the Albaron Star Kingdom.

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Axis Armada	The large and powerful fleet built by the Axis in an effort to conquer the Settled Worlds.
Cybot	Semi-organic humanoid robots descended from the Omnicron Titans of the Second Empire.
BattleFrame	Ground combat suit designed to give the firepower of an AFV with the mobility of infantry.
AeroFrame	Orbital combat suits designed for engaging AeroFighters and for ground support missions.
Brawler	Heavy Combat PowerSuits designed for urban warfare carrying short-ranged weapons and extra-strength armor.
Combat PowerSuit (CPS)	Powered armor designed to enhance a warrior's fighting ability. Usually carries weaponry far superior to that possessed by standard infantry. Lighter than a BattleFrame or Titan.
HyperDrone	HyperSpace-capable automated drone usually carrying several TMD devices. Sometimes called a "bombardment drone".
Titan	Heavy duty powered armor designed for both advanced combat ability and intimidation purposes.
Merc Guild	Shortened name of the Mercenary Guild, the primary supplier of Planetary Assault forces in the Settled Worlds.
Xeno Legions	The Commonwealth of Man's advanced alien mercenary forces. Xenos are usually commanded by humans, and can earn full citizenship rights in the Commonwealth by serving for one century. They are kept in hypersleep when not involved in conflicts.
Imperial Gladiators	The Gladiators have been the primary defenders of the Imperium for millennia. Led by their individual Centurions, and ultimately the Grand Centurion, the Gladiators took part in the overthrow of the Second Empire (also called the Titan Empire) and helped establish the independence of the Second Branch of Man. Cloned from the mightiest human warriors in the Imperium and enhanced by genetic manipulation, they had never lost a war until the coming of the Axis, when they were overwhelmed and virtually annihilated to a man during the Sedition.
Cruiser (aka "Class C" starship)	The standard multi-role class of combat starship, cruisers are independent patrol vessels with significant combat capabilities. They usually mass between 64,000 and 128,000 tons and carry six to eight capital-scale weapons.
Destroyer (aka "Class D" starship)	The smallest of the offensive capital warships, these vessels serve as a light combatant in most fleets, but are quite capable of independent missions. They usually mass between 32,000 and 64,000 tons and carry four to six capital-scale weapons.
Escort (aka	A somewhat uncommon class of warship, these ships are tasked in

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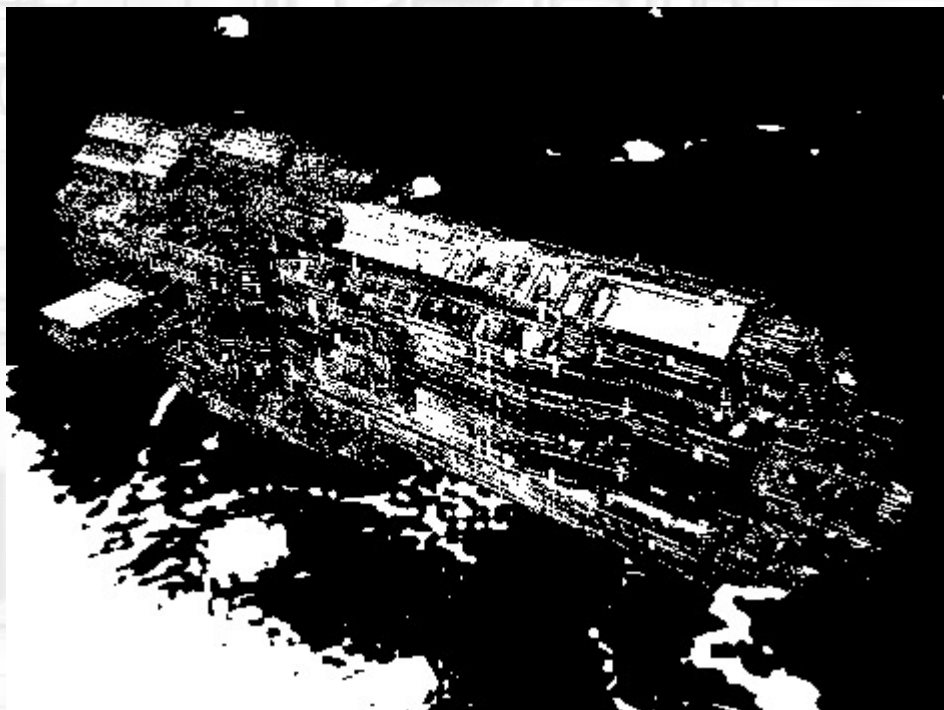
"Class E" starship)	mostly convoy escort modes. Often, they are based on "upgunned" frigate spaceframes with additional defensive equipment installed. They usually mass between 16,000 and 32,000 tons and carry three to four capital-scale weapons.
Frigate (aka "Class F" starship)	A light warship that can still pack a punch. Often they carry two capital-scale weapons and usually mass between 8,000 and 16,000 tons.
Gunship (aka "Class G" starship)	The lightest class of HyperSpace-capable warships, gunships can carry a single capital-scale weapon. They usually mass between 4,000 and 8,000 tons.
Strike Bomber	A hybrid light corvette/heavy fighter with the capability of carrying three warheads. Mass about 3,000 tons.
Heavy Fighter/Strikeboat	Can carry two warheads and mass about 2,000 tons.
Interceptor/Standard StarFighter	The standard class of StarFighters. Usually mass under 1,000 tons.
Defender	A "Class D" warship with a non-offensive primary role. These often carry anti-fighter or anti-TMD armaments.
Protected Cruiser	A Class "C" vessel with some armor protection, but not to the level of a true armored cruiser.
ThermoStellar Nova Bomb (TNB)	A strategic device designed to induce an artificial supernova explosion in an otherwise stable star.
Crustbuster	A strategic device designed to trigger massive destruction on a planetary scale by inducing seismic activity on an unimaginable scale.
Crimson OverLord	A dark alien evil from the Galactic Core. Little is known about its origin or true purpose.
Council of WarLords	The leaders of the Axis, serving at the pleasure of the OverLord.
Astral Arks	The eight ships that left Earth following the cataclysmic Fall of Eden. They carried humanity to the stars, seeding the Settled Worlds with life.
Modified Man	Through genetic manipulation and cyborgization humanity took on many forms to adapt to the new worlds it settled.
Saurian Man/Zarlacks	The progenitors of the Sarlicons.
Felinoids	The progenitors of the J'Garans. (Following the fall of the earlier T'Garan and the L'Narans).
Ostrogols	The dark, vampyric peoples of the Rift. (Aka Drifters/Rifters)
Followers of	The religious name of the Ostrogol people.

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Monolith	
Laythian Mass	A dark star cluster and realm of the dreaded Laythian xenofoms. Unexplored by those of the Settled Worlds. Sometimes used to describe the Laythian nation as a whole.
Laythians	The dreaded galactic "destroyers" of Sarlicon legend.
Tactical Fleet Intelligence	The Unified Fleet intelligence service headed by Admiral Falkenwrath during the Axis War.
Fringers	Humans that live on the very edge of Settled Worlds' space. The ancestors of most of the peoples of the Frontier League are believed to have been Fringers.
Jaenovian Republic	Ancient survivors of the First Empire and descendants of one of the eight Astral Arks. They are primarily light-worlders and are locked in perpetual combat with the forces of the Albaron Star Kingdom.
"Admiral Abyss"	A euphemistic term used to describe incidents where a ship goes missing. (ie. "Admiral Abyss must have destroyed that ship.")
Omnicon Enigma	The unresolved question of what occurred to bring about the disappearance of the entire Omnicon robotic race.
Planetary Guard	Small armed forces equipped with non-FTL combat ships designed to protect individual planets from pirates, smuggling and terrorism.
Riftspawn/ Voidspawn	Another name for the Laythians that travel the deep voids.
Gladiators	Enhanced cyborgs with many additional systems upgrades. Designed to be the ultimate warriors for the old Imperium. They ended up taking over the Imperium and enforcing a reign of terror upon the worlds under their control.
Galactic Compendium	The short form of the Galactic Chronicles, written by the Maavans to describe the events of the Third Empire. It is read much more commonly than the much more extensive Chronicles.
Guardian Legions	The warriors of the Imperium, defeated by the Gladitorial Sedition.
Alpha Marines (aka <i>Guardian Sentinels</i>)	Ancient warriors kept in reserve for "fighting the future".
Havok Horde	Ancient evil darkness at the Dark Core of the Galaxy.
Consulate Stations	Ambassadorial-type stations, meant to help various races meet together to solve their differences.
WarStars/Battle Stations	Heavy weapons-laden semi-mobile space stations designed for planetary and system siege missions.
Monitor Defense Platforms/	Carrying only station-keeping thrusters, these are heavily armed planetary defense platforms tasked with protecting worlds from assault.

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Stations	
Porcupine Cruisers	Missile cruisers with extensive externally mounted missile launchers.
"Plying the Great Black"	Euphemistic term describing interstellar space travel.
Cybrid	Human or alien that has been "converted" to a cyborg under the Overlord's direction.
Anthroframe (A-Frame)	Powered exoskeleton suit used for both mercantile and military purposes.

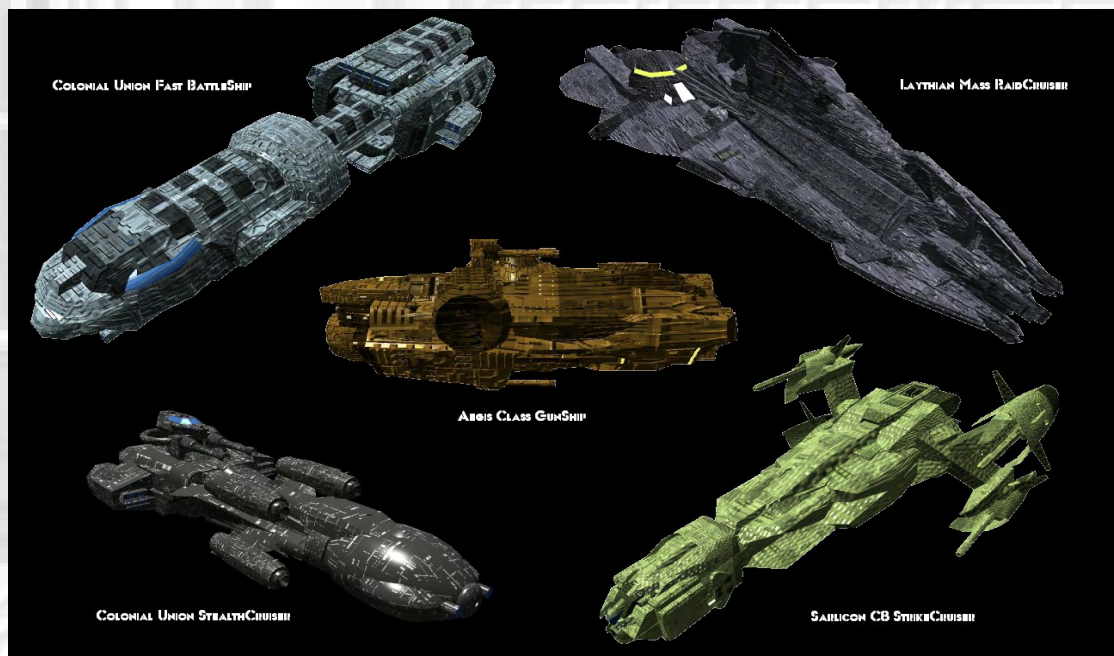


The power of the Omnicron can not be overstated. But what is their ultimate purpose?

STARSHIP COMBAT IN ASTRAL EMPIRES 10,000

Although starship combat is a major focus of the ASTRAL EMPIRES Universe during all eras, this book is focused on the roles individual characters play in the unfolding events of galactic history. For that reason, other than a few sample ship counters, you will not find the game elements necessary for undertaking starship combat in this resource. Instead, these particular aspects of ASTRAL EMPIRES are included in *Interstellar Arsenal*, the technology guide that comes with this RPG. In addition, you may also choose to make use of any of the Astral Empires tactical starship combat games, including *Astral Empires: Galaxy Command*, the book designed to serve as a companion for this RPG for fighting any battles that take place during campaigns.

The tactical rules mentioned above allow you to choose the level of detail in your campaigns as an add-on to the RPG rules or as a separate game all together. Using these tools players can run anything from an entire empire to task forces to individual ships and starfighters. For the most comprehensive gaming experience possible you can even run all levels simultaneously, “zooming in” on various aspects of the drama for a complete and fulfilling science fiction experience. An integration guide (for bringing the RPG and tactical games together) is available from Port Nova Media.



OpenD6 Reference Sheet

Generic Standard Difficulties

See Chapter 7 for general task resolution information and other modifiers.

Automatic (0): Almost anyone can perform this action; there is no need to roll. (Generally, this difficulty is not listed in a pregenerated adventure; it is included here for reference purposes.)

Very Easy (1-5): Nearly everyone can accomplish this task. Typically, tasks with such a low difficulty only are rolled when they are crucial to the scenario.

Easy (6-10): Although characters usually have no difficulty with this task, an untrained character may find it challenging.

Moderate (11-15): There is a fair chance that the average character will fail at this type of task. Tasks of this type require skill, effort, and concentration.

Difficult (16-20): Those with little experience in the task must have a lot of luck to accomplish this type of action.

Very Difficult (21-25): The average character only rarely succeeds at these kinds of task. Only the most talented regularly succeed.

Heroic (26-30), Legendary (31 or more): These kinds of tasks are nearly impossible, though there's still a slim chance that lucky average or highly experienced characters can accomplish them.

Generic Difficulty Modifiers

See page 53 for examples.

Situation Helps/Hinders Character	Modifier
Slightly	+/-1-5
Significantly	+/-6-10
Decisively	+/-11-15
Overwhelmingly	+/-16 or more

Interaction Difficulty Modifiers

See pages 72-73 for additional information and modifiers.

Base Difficulty: 10 or target's Charisma or mettle

Situation	Modifier
Target is friendly or trusting	-5
Target is neutral toward character or of equal standing	0
Target is hostile or has superior standing	+5
Target is an enemy	+10
Target is in weakened position	-10
Request is something target would do anyway or target feels is of minor importance	0
Request is illegal or highly dangerous	+10
Target is on guard or actively resisting*	+10

*Do not include this modifier if you are using the active mental defense described in the "Mental Defenses" section.

Information Difficulties

See page 72 for additional information and modifiers.

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Amount of Information	Difficulty
Basic or common information; unconfirmed rumors	5
Theories; generalities	10
Complex concepts; moderately detailed information	15
Professional level; extensive (though not complete) information	20
Cutting-edge topics; extensive information, including peripheral details and extrapolations	30

Condition	Modifier
Age of information (per century in the past)	+5
Closely guarded secret	+15

Observation Difficulties

See page 73 for additional information and modifiers.

Situation	Difficulty
Noticing obvious, generic facts; casual glance	5
Noticing obvious details (ex. number of people)	10
Noticing a few less obvious details (ex. gist of conversation)	15
Spotting a few specific details (ex. identities of individuals)	20
Spotting a few obscure details (ex. specifics of conversation)	25
Noticing many obscure details	30 or more

Movement Difficulty Modifiers

See pages 55-56 for additional information and modifiers.

Base Difficulty for Characters: 0 (running); 5 (other movement)

Situation	Modifier
Easy terrain (flat surface, smooth water, using a ladder, light breeze, light rain or fog)	0
Moderate terrain (uneven surface, small obstacles, choppy water, climbing a tree, strong winds, heavy rain or fog)	+5
Rough terrain (large but negotiable obstacles, strong undercurrent, climbing a rough wall, flying near unyielding obstacles such as pillars or trees)	+10
Very rough terrain (dense and large obstacles, stormy weather, a few airborne hazards, hail)	+15
Hazardous terrain (minefield, narrow walkway, many airborne hazards, large waves, climbing a smooth surface, complete darkness)	+20

Very hazardous terrain (corridor filled with falling debris and explosions, swimming or flying in a hurricane) +25 or more

Combat Summary

See pages 60-62 and 68-71 for additional information and modifiers.

Determining the Difficulty

Base combat difficulty = defense total

- Defense total = (passive defense value or active defense value) plus combat difficulty modifiers
- Passive defense value = 10
- Active defense value = full defense value or partial defense value
- Full defense value = any defense skill roll + 10
- Partial defense value = any defense skill roll

Determining Success

If the attacker's combat skill total plus any modifiers equals or exceeds the target's defense roll, the attack succeeds and may do damage.

Determining Damage

- *Damage total*
- For attacks that do damage not modified by strength: damage total = roll of weapon damage die code plus damage modifiers
- For attacks that do damage modified by strength: damage total = roll of weapon damage die code plus character's Strength Damage die code plus damage modifiers
- Damage resistance total
- Body Points: roll of Armor die code plus defense modifiers
- Wounds: roll of Physique plus Armor die code plus defense modifiers
- If the damage total is greater than the damage resistance total, the target was injured. If the damage total is less than or equal to the damage resistance total, the target was not injured.
- If the target was injured, subtract the damage resistance total from the damage total. Then either subtract this from the target's current Body Total or compare the value on the "Wound Level" chart.

Common Combat Difficulty Modifiers

Cover Situation	Modifier
Light smoke/fog	+1D (+3)
Thick smoke/fog	+2D (+6)
Very thick smoke/fog	+4D (+12)
Poor light, twilight	+1D (+3)
Moonlit night	+2D (+6)
Complete darkness	+4D (+12)
Object hides 25% of target	+1D (+3)
Object hides 50% of target	+2D (+6)
Object hides 75% of target	+4D (+12)
Object hides 100% of	*

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target

** If cover provides protection, the attacker cannot hit the target directly, but damage done to the cover might exceed the Armor Value it gives the target, and, indirectly, the target receives damage. Most of the time, the attacker must eliminate the cover before having a chance to hit the target.*

Range	Distance to Target	Modifier
Point Blank	0-3 meters	-5
Short	3 meters to first value*	0
Medium	First to second value*	+5
Long	Second to third value*	+10

** Values refer to values given in the weapon's range listing.*

Weapon is difficult to use (character unfamiliar with technology, object is hard to throw or grasp, melee or thrown weapon is more than 60 centimeters long, etc.): +5 or more to the combat difficulty. The Galaxy Master (GM) may decide that such factors as experience, strength, and features of the weapon (such as a well-balanced sword) lower this modifier.

Strength Damage

To figure the Strength Damage die code, drop the pips from the character's Physique or lifting die code (but include any Disadvantages or Special Abilities), divide the number by 2, and round up.

Wound Levels

See pages 63-65 for additional damage information and modifiers.

Effect	Wounds* Damage Total >= Resistance Total By:	Body Points† Left
Stunned	1-3	80% - 60%
Wounded	4-8	59% - 40%
Severely Wounded	4-8**	39% - 20%
Incapacitated	9-12	19% - 10%
Mortally Wounded	13-15	1% - 9%
Dead	16 or more	0

**Note: Penalties imposed by each level are not cumulative and they are not included when determining the resistance total or damage done by nonstrength-based weapons. Any additional damage less than the character's current level moves the character up by one level.*

***A character moves to the Severely Wounded level if the difference is between 4 and 8 and she already has the Wounded level.*

†Note: This is an optional chart for use with Body Points. The "Body Points Left" column is based on the character's maximum Body Points. Round so no overlap exists between levels. Penalties imposed by each level are not cumulative; do not include them when determining the stun or damage resistance total or any total not involving a skill or attribute.

Stunned: Either receives -1D for all remaining actions this round and next round or may only defend or

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retreat in the next round.

Wounded: -1D to all actions until healed.

Severely Wounded: -2D on all actions until healed.

Incapacitated: As a free action before losing consciousness, he may try to stay up with a Moderate (15) stamina roll. If the character succeeds, he may continue to act, but all actions have a -3D penalty. If he fails, he is knocked out for 10D minutes.

Mortally Wounded: The character is near death and knocked unconscious with no chance to keep up. Roll the character's Physique each round, the character finally dying if the roll is less than the number of minutes a character's been Mortally Wounded.

Dead: The character has perished.

Abbreviated Healing Chart

See pages 66-67 for additional healing information and modifiers.

Healing Total	Body Points Recovered	Current Wound Level
1-5	2	—
6-10	1D	Stunned, unconscious
11-15	2D	Wounded, Severely Wounded
16-20	3D	Incapacitated
21-25	4D	Mortally Wounded
26-30	5D	—



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A NOTE ON SAMPLE CHARACTER TYPES AND SPECIES

The OpenD6 system is notable as a roleplaying game in that it is not built around the idea of rigid character classes. How this idea relates to Astral Empires is that you can take a person or creature of any type and give them the necessary skills to perform whatever functions are required of them. Earlier in this book we have described some of the possible characters you might want to play in the 10,000 AD era. Our other sourcebooks will provide many additional characters for other sub-settings, but the core idea we are striving for is complete freedom for you to be able to create anyone (or anything) you want to play.

With that in mind we have give you a few sample character templates here in the back of this book, but have decided not to force you to stay within specified attribute minimums and maximums, nor required you to accept specific disadvantages and/or advantages, nor provided additional directions that would ultimately constrain your choices. The sourcebooks for each sub-setting of Astral Empires will provide some of that information but if one thinks of the variation we see in the human form on our world, not to mention the vast ranges of intellectual and mental capabilities then you should feel free to create *the* character that *you* want to play. These rules are here for your use, not to restrict your options.

So let your imagination run wild...



ASTRAL EMPIRES

Character Sheet

Character Name: _____ Type: ALPHA MARINE
 Player: _____ Species: TERRAN HUMAN
 Sex: _____ Height: _____

Physical Description: _____ Personality: _____

Background: _____ Objectives: _____

A Quote: _____ Connection with Characters: _____



DEXTERITY/
AGILITY _____ KNOWLEDGE _____ MECHANICAL _____ Special Abilities: _____

PERCEPTION _____ STRENGTH _____ TECHNICAL _____

Equipment: _____

Credits: _____

Movement Rate: _____ Weapons _____

Luck Points: _____

PK: ☐Yes ☐No

Character Points: _____

- ☐ Stunned
- ☐ Wounded
- ☐ Incapacitated
- ☐ Mortally Wounded

ASTRAL EMPIRES

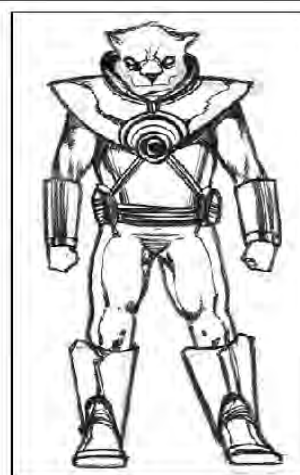
Character Sheet

Character Name: _____ Type: WARRIOR
 Player: _____ Species: J'GARAN (FELINOID)
 Sex: _____ Height: _____

Physical Description: _____ Personality: _____

Background: _____ Objectives: _____

A Quote: _____ Connection with Characters: _____



DEXTERITY/AGILITY _____ KNOWLEDGE _____ MECHANICAL _____ Special Abilities: _____

PERCEPTION _____ STRENGTH _____ TECHNICAL _____

Equipment: _____

Credits: _____

Movement Rate: _____ Weapons

Luck Points: _____

PK: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Character Points: _____

- ☐ Stunned
- ☐ Wounded
- ☐ Incapacitated
- ☐ Mortally Wounded

- ☐ Stunned
- ☐ Wounded
- ☐ Incapacitated
- ☐ Mortally Wounded

- ☐ Stunned
- ☐ Wounded
- ☐ Incapacitated
- ☐ Mortally Wounded

**ASTRAL
EMPIRES**

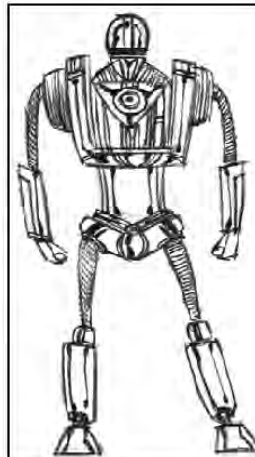
Character Sheet

Character Name: _____ Type: *UTILITY ROBOT*
 Player: _____ Species: *ROBOT/A.I.*
 Sex: _____ Height: _____

Physical Description: _____ Personality: _____

Background: _____ Objectives: _____

A Quote: _____ Connection with Characters: _____



DEXTERITY/AGILITY _____ KNOWLEDGE _____ MECHANICAL _____ Special Abilities: _____

PERCEPTION _____ STRENGTH _____ TECHNICAL _____

Equipment: _____

Credits: _____

Movement Rate: _____ Weapons _____
 Luck Points: _____
 PK: ☐ Yes ☐ No
 Character Points: _____

- ☐ Stunned
- ☐ Wounded
- ☐ Incapacitated
- ☐ Mortally Wounded

- ☐ Stunned
- ☐ Wounded
- ☐ Incapacitated
- ☐ Mortally Wounded

**ASTRAL
EMPIRES**

Character Sheet

Character Name: _____ Type: _____
 Player: _____ Species: _____
 Sex: _____ Height: _____

Physical Description: _____ Personality: _____

Background: _____ Objectives: _____

A Quote: _____ Connection with Characters: _____

DEXTERITY/AGILITY _____ KNOWLEDGE _____ MECHANICAL _____ Special Abilities: _____

Equipment: _____

PERCEPTION _____ STRENGTH _____ TECHNICAL _____

Credits: _____

Movement Rate: _____ Weapons _____

Luck Points: _____

PK: ☐ Yes ☐ No _____

Character Points: _____

- ☐ Stunned
- ☐ Wounded
- ☐ Incapacitated
- ☐ Mortally Wounded

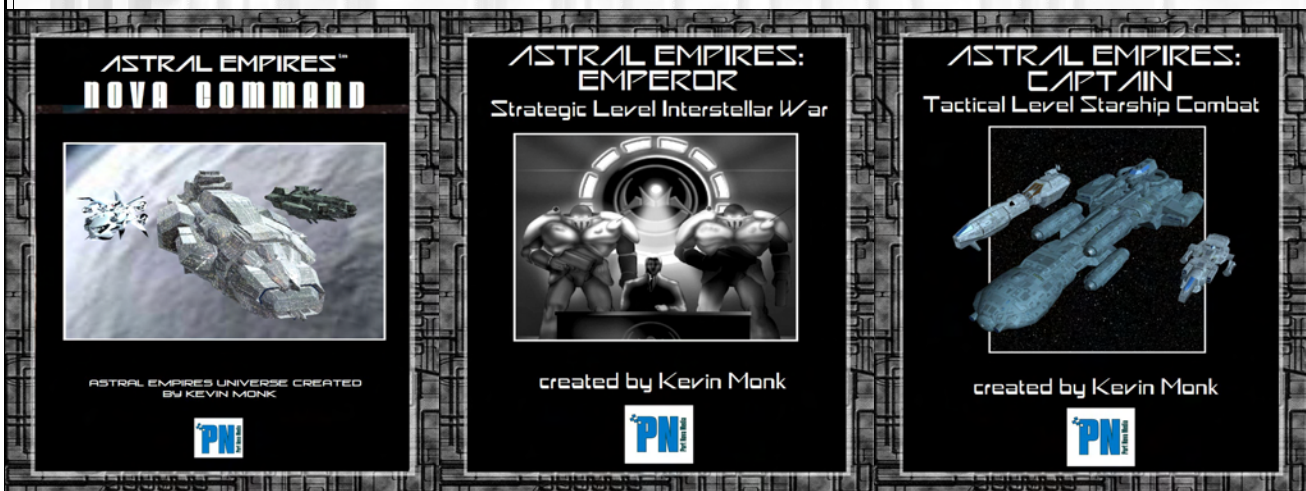
ASTRAL EMPIRES-THE RPG-OPEN D6 EDITION

What is ASTRAL EMPIRES?

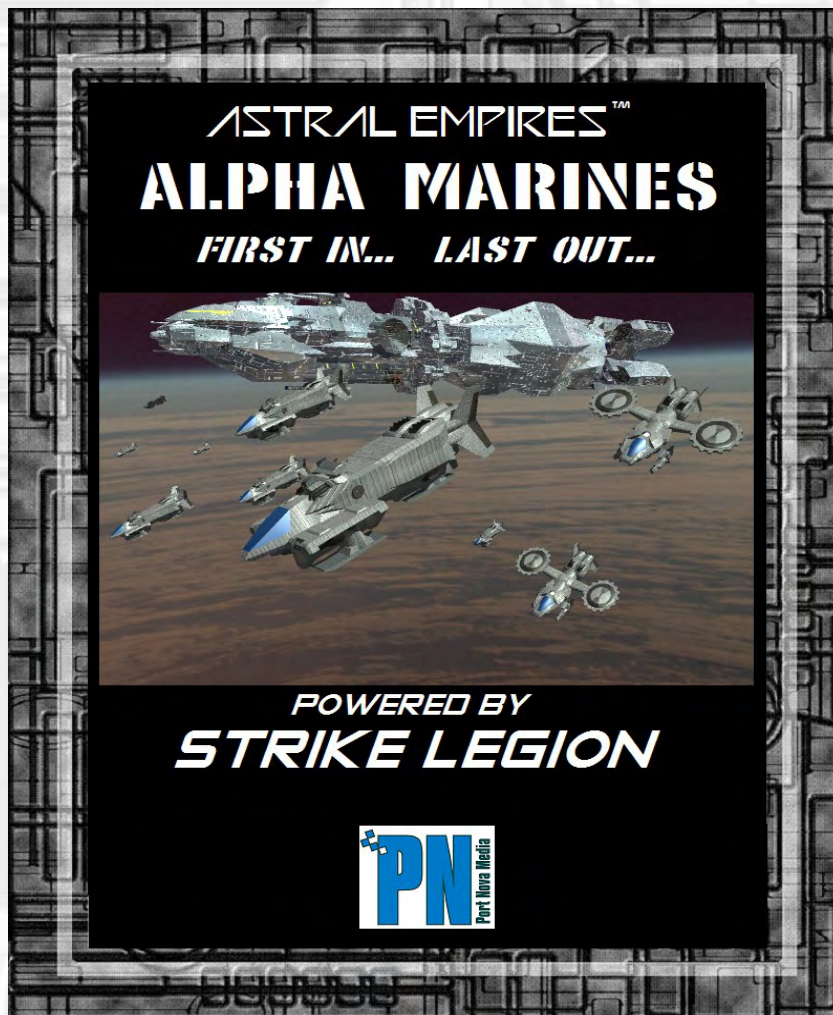
ASTRAL EMPIRES is a massive science fiction worldbuilding project including wargames, roleplaying games and original fiction designed for the purpose of creating an interconnected milieu made up of the many different themes of science fiction set within a single large-scale original universe. The premise is to have various time periods and astrographical regions of the galaxy (called the "Mosaic Galaxy" due to the many different types of civilizations present throughout) available for readers and gamers to explore which all relate to each other through time and space.

If you like 4x games then you'll probably like ASTRAL EMPIRES: EMPEROR. If starship combat is your preference, then perhaps you will find one of our tactical games like NOVA COMMAND or BATTLESHIFT enjoyable, not to mention our upcoming ADMIRAL, COMMODORE, and CAPTAIN multi-scale starship warfare games. If you like sci-fi ground combat, then check out ASTRAL EMPIRES: ALPHA MARINES where you can get your fix of hover tanks, mekstryders, and power armor all in a single unified setting. For roleplayers there's the ASTRAL EMPIRES RPG using the Mongoose Traveller game engine with an OpenD6 version coming soon.

Check it out at: www.scifirpg.com



Coming soon from Port Nova Media:



Ground combat in the Astral Empires universe powered
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WELCOME TO THE YEAR AD 10,000....

It is the far future of Terran-born humanity. Following a succession of galactic civilizations came the time of darkness, a time when the galaxy's many wonders were overshadowed by the dreadful terrors that lurked between the stars... Death-wielding robotic superships, massive fleets of spacefaring organic locusts, and numerous xenoalien species trying to take advantage of the carnage that followed the fall of the Galactic Federacy in AD 07,000...

Over the past three thousand years many worlds have cut off all contact to the outside galaxy in a vain effort to try to hold those terrors at bay. Now new civilizations have emerged during a time of galactic renaissance. On both sides of the Great Divide arise numerous successor star kingdoms, each one vying for supremacy in the Deep and Wide of galactic space. As these cultures encounter one other there is certain to be both conflict between worlds and the formation of new alliances. It is also certain to be a time of great adventure unparalleled in galactic history....

Come aboard to experience the wonders of the ASTRAL EMPIRES!!

This version of the ASTRAL EMPIRES Roleplaying Game is compatible with most science fiction RPGS, but is optimized for use with the Mongoose Travellertm system available from Mongoose Games.

